■ World / A8 ■ Across / A13 ■ Sports / A17 ■ Business / B1 ■ Entertainment / A7

Abbas wins Palestinian elections

Baguio tourism in peril over reports of meningo

Pacquiao could end up facing Morales instead

Kirin hikes stake in SMC to 19.67%

US fans go for Mel Gibson Michael Moore

Nurses, teachers warned anew on illegal recruiters

Blanche S. Rivera

BEFORE you sell your parents' house and lot, pawn your wife's jewelry, or hand over your life savings to yet another recruiter, read this: Illegal recruiters duped nurses and teachers hoping to work in the United States of almost P6 billion in the last six months of last year.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, January 11, 2005 • 24 pages. / vol. 28 / no. 24

MUSLIM women denounce the arrest of 16 persons during a police raid on an Islamic center in Manila during a rally in front of PNP headquarters in Camp Crame.

Bombs, guns in raid 'planted,' says group

By Christian V. Esguerra

A MUSLIM group said yesterday it had two witnesses who would swear that police planted the explosives and guns in the supposed safe house in an alleged Islamic terror plot to bomb the Black Nazarene procession.

Panagir Ledesma, head of the Bulik Iduan Unity Congress, said the pair were preparing affidavits stating that police had found no evidence against the supposed plotters when they raided the Islamic Information Center in Manila last Friday.

Earlier, two top intelligence officials of the Philippine National Police had also questioned the existence of an alleged plot to attack Sandiwa's religious feast in Quiapo. The procession came off peacefully.

Quoting the witnesses, Ledesma said that on breaking into the center, the raiders immediately handcuffed 17 persons and pushed them to the floor.

Police later brought in "big black bags" from which they took out guns and explosives, Ledesma claimed.

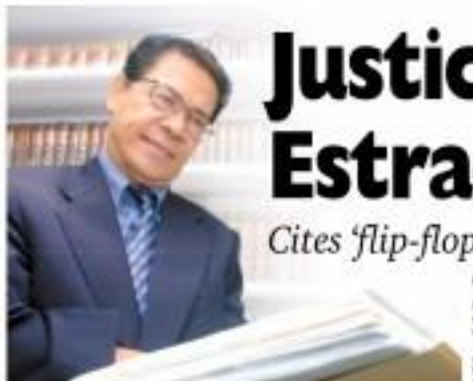
"Then they called in the media to immediately take [the] pictures of the evidence," Ledesma told reporters during his group's protest rally in front of Camp Crame.

The other witness was also to be the center, and saw the same thing, according to Ledesma.

He said the two witnesses—one of whom was among those detained by the police—were now in his group's custody.

Senior Supt. Rodolfo "Boogie" Mendoza, whose men carried out the raid, said police were hunting 300 other suspected Islamic militants. Agonis Hasan Orano is wanted.

He said the 300 were believed to have misdemeanor explosives making in their search of the center in 2003, most of them as members of the Rajah Sulaiman [illegible]



SANDIGANBAYAN Justice Edilberto Sandoval becomes the third head of a division trying former President Joseph Estrada to leave resigned.

Justice quits Estrada trial

Cites 'flip-flopping' of colleagues

By Armando N. Nocum

HE STOOD out as the lone dissenter on motions granting ousted President Joseph Estrada bouse arrest and a medical trip abroad.

He was bypassed when Malacañang appointed a junior member of the Sandiganbayan to be presiding justice last year.

Citing health reasons, 63-year-old Justice Edilberto Sandoval quit his post yesterday as chair and member of the special division trying Estrada on plunder and perjury charges.

But Sandoval voiced displeasure over the alleged inconsistencies and flip-flopping on the part of his colleagues in the anti-graft court. The other members of the first division are Justices Teresita de Castro and Francisco Villaruz Jr.

"I maintained a consistent position. I dissented," he said. "What is on trial here is not only the former President, but the Sandiganbayan."

His resignation is seen as a big blow to the court still reeling from criticism that it is going soft on Estrada and that supposed pro-Estrada justices were tossed out of such cases.

"I resigned satisfied with the thought that I have done my best and I have been fair," he told court officials, lawyers and observers who were expecting an "explosive" beating the court's first day back.

Sandoval is to be replaced by Br. Cassin, but Estrada's trial could be delayed due to the changes, court sources said.

Estrada, arrested on rebellion charges P4.5-billion before his term was ended by a popular uprising in January 2001, is now in Hong Kong recovering from knee surgery. He is due to return on Jan. 19.

A motion by Estrada's lawyers to extend his stay by a week was to have been heard by the special antigraft court Sandiganbayan but the hearing and his trial are now tentatively a few judge is named.

(CONTINUED ON A2)

No more 'Mr. Suave' ring tone

By Armand N. Nocum and Philip C. Tubeza

ONE? one mobile phone was allowed to ring during hearings of the special division of Sandiganbayan for five months up to yesterday.

It belonged to former acting Presiding Justice Edilberto Sandoval, who headed the division starting in August 2004.

The ring tone not only stopped the hearings momentarily, but also elicited smiles from people in the court faced by the three-year trial of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Sandoval's ring tone is "Mr. Suave (Mr. Smooth or Cool)," which was sung by the lead pop rock group Pandora in Tagalog.

As he carefully stated his reasons for quitting his post as chair and member of the special division yesterday, Sandoval appeared to have been living up to his ring tone.

Colleagues described Sandoval as an excellent jurist with solid credentials in criminal law.

"Actually, he's a very good lawyer. He has an excellent background, especially in criminal law," said lawyer Ishmael Khan, public information chief of the Supreme Court.

Khan also noted that Sandoval was the only current justice in the antigraft court.

Sandoval was voted most outstanding judge of Manila for three consecutive years (1991-93) before President Fidel Ramos appointed him to the Court of Appeals in 1994.

Moro rebs overrun Army base; 21 killed

By Alexis Flynn and PDI Mindanao Bureau

HEAVY to avenge the death of one of their commanders, about 200 Moro guerrilla overran an army base in Maguindanao, triggering fierce clashes that left 21 combatants dead, the military said yesterday.

The fighting, involving guerrillas of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and other movements, was the biggest to occur in the South in nearly two years and threatened a ceasefire that had prevailed for 27 months.

"We are in close contact with the MILF. We are trying to contain the clashes so the ceasefire agreement is to prevent a spillover to other areas," Armed Forces spokesperson Brig. Gen. Abraham Dolorfino said.

Casualty reports from Malaysia, Brunei and Libya, together with government and MILF representatives, were trying to establish the cause of the fighting, guerrilla spokesperson Eid Kabalu said.

The dead included 13 guerrillas, the military said. But military officials gave varying figures—ranging from six to eight—on the number of soldiers dead.

"I am not sure of that, unless we have the body count," 6th Infantry Division spokesperson Lt. Col. Franklin del Prado said, when asked about the 13 report.

(CONTINUED ON A2)

Rosebud-Mike fight over money, Pingcharges

By Michael Lim Ubac

[illegible]

That was how Gov. Ophelia Lacson described the recent scrimmage between former presidential flying aide Felicito "Rosebud" Ong and First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo.

"Sana ang kahuli-hulihan [illegible] Lacson declared [illegible] thought she had been "officially informed" by a group of top generals who ordered her to lend up [illegible] the issue of her P2-million appeal to her was for

Chopper crash, aftershocks rattle relief effort

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia—A US helicopter on a tsunami relief mission on Monday crashed in Indonesia, injuring all 10 members (two aboard and briefly suspending operations, while strong aftershocks and severe rainstorms provided more challenges for relief workers two weeks after the killer waves hit.

Millions of people are homeless and bodies were still being pulled from collapsed buildings after the Dec. 26 tsunami killed more than 150,000 people across 11 countries. Indonesia's government on Monday promised to step up efforts to recover and bury the dead.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was surveying damage in the Maldives, a low-lying string of coral atolls in the Indian Ocean that lost 82 people. The United Nations is also coordinating humanitarian relief efforts in all the countries affected by the disaster and is asking that responsibility "very, very seriously," Annan said.

The US Seahawk helicopter crashed in a rice paddy about 500 meters from the airport in Banda Aceh, capital of Indonesia's hard-hit Aceh province and the hub of international aid operations.

Capt. Randall L. Card, commander of the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier stationed off the Indonesian coast, said over the ship's headquarters that four of the servicemen had very minor injuries and six were hurt more seriously; the worst with a dislocated pelvis.

Lt. Cmdr. John M. Daniels blamed the crash, which happened just after 7:30 a.m. (0030 GMT), on "possible mechanical failure." He said investigators said there was no indication the helicopter had been shot down.

The crash came amid heightened security measures to prevent terrorist threats with attacks on Indonesian—particularly in Aceh where rebels have waged a separatist war in the province for nearly three decades.

Members of the UK staff in Aceh are on high alert and armed guards patrol their compounds.

AMERICAN military personnel walk around the Navy Seahawk helicopter that crashed in a rice field near a military air base in Banda Aceh. The aircraft was bringing aid to tsunami victims.

A3
WEATHER FORECAST
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2005
Second FRONTPAGE

PNP announces 'surprise' inspection for bad eggs in police ranks

By Christian V. Esguerra

ALL KINDS of bad eggs—moonlighting cops, wanted cops, absentee cops—can be found in the Philippine National Police force, an independent antigraft body admitted yesterday.

And for Sen. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, head of the PNP Internal Affairs Service, the best way to flush them out is to announce a "surprise" inspection.

"It's better for them to know it is an advance and correct it than to know it is beforehand and still not do anything about it," he said yesterday. "They'll be in deep trouble then."

Commentaries and fan mail yesterday began the arduous task of separating all PNP officers and units at least 60 percent.

In a memorandum dated Jan. 6, he outlined the targets of the "nationwide surprise inspection."

Leading the pack of undesirable policemen are what he called the "51/50" officers, or those who report for work only partly.

"We all know that they've been here since time immemorial," Caramonan said.

There are also "moonlighting" officers, or those who have a "main occupation" and consider their PNP service only as a part-time job, the inspector general said.

Then there are cops who have been declared absent without official leave (Abol) but had yet to be investigated and expelled, those who are physically and mentally incapable of working, and those who are roaming around abroad, he said.

During the inspections, IAS officials will look for these cops and file appropriate charges against them, Caramonan said.

Part of the hunt is an expanded lifestyle check on all PNP officers.

"Making the way we will ask about policemen who might be maintaining lifestyles grossly disproportionate to their legitimate incomes," Caramonan said.

The IAS started the lifestyle check in October last year in the wake of allegations that some policemen, senior officers particularly, were living beyond their means.

But after the IAS ordered all cops to submit their statements of assets and liabilities for the last five years, it was not clear what became of the campaign.

Susan picks up FPJ fight vs GMA

She asks SC to allow her to substitute for dead hubby in poll protest

By Philip C. Tubeza

ACTRESS Susan Roces, after "deep soul-searching and thorough deliberation," yesterday asked the Supreme Court sitting as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal to allow her to continue the electoral protest filed by her late husband, Fernando Poe Jr., against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In an 11-page petition, Roces (real name: Jesusa Sonora Poe) asked the tribunal to permit her to substitute for her late husband who had refused to concede the presidential election to Ms Arroyo, that ging timbre Feud.

Mr. Poe, movie star, died on Dec. 14, 2004, two days after suffering a massive stroke. He lost the May 10, 2004, presidential election to Ms Arroyo by over one million votes.

Roces said that while she knows that she would not become President if the election protest prospered, the protest should continue "so as to ascertain the true and genuine will of the people/electorate" for the May elections.

"For only institution and prosecuted purpose is to insure that the sovereign will and true voice of the Filipino electorate as manifested in the national elections is upheld and sustained," said the petition filed by her lawyer, Estelito Mendoza Jr.

"Thus, aside the election as her own, pulling and impelling purpose and reason, herein intervenor substitute protestant also, PEI, after a deep and searching and thorough deliberation, has opted and decided to continue and pursue the above protest case initiated by her deceased husband/protestant," it said.

Mendoza asked the court to allow Roces to substitute for her deceased husband, "but in representation of Juan de la Cruz/the Filipino people/electorate," and to issue a resolution directing the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to, among others, furnish the tribunal with the election documents, records, equipment and paraphernalia used in the May 10 elections.

In a show of support, leading members of the Nacionalista Party (NP) joined Mendoza when he filed the motion yesterday morning. They included former Sen. Gregorio Honasan, Rep. Francis Escudero, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, Mandaluyong Mayor Benjamin Abalos Jr. and Pasay Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad.

Mendoza said Poe's running mate, former Sen. Loren Legarda, did not submit, for the late actor because she would have had to shoulder the cost of the protest—around P60 million—as well.

"Unopposed already has two protest: Ogoton Vice President Noli de Castro. If the substitute, then the third (in line) would double," Bellaniro said.

"Also, Legarda's claim not have to substitute for Poe. If her own election protest prospers together with that of Poe's, then she would benefit and would become President," he said.

Bellaniro said Poe's death did "not extinguish" the election protest against Ms Arroyo and that Roces possessed the "legal capacity and standing" to substitute for her husband.

He cited the Supreme Court ruling in De Castro vs Comelec and Medrana, where the court ruled that "an election protest is not purely personal and restricts to the protestant or to the protestee such that the death of either would end the court's authority to continue the protest proceedings."

Bellaniro also said that Roces had the "standing determinative to unearth the truth," the "fervent yearning to achieve justice," and the "willingness to assume new grounds the required logistical and necessary finances" to pursue the case until it is decided.

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ROCES wants to find out "true and genuine will of the people."

GRIEF-stricken supporters of the late actor Fernando Poe Jr. weep as they watch the motorcade carrying his widow, Susan Roces, pass by in front of the Supreme Court building.

OPPOSITION leaders walk toward the Supreme Court to file Susan Roces' petition to pursue Fernando Poe Jr.'s electoral protest against President Macapagal-Arroyo. They are, from left, Jejomar Binay, Benjamin Abalos, Rep. Francis Escudero, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, Arroyo Ignacio Bunye, and behind, Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco and San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito. (Inset) Susan Roces' signature on the electoral protest documents

Malacañang unfazed by FPJ widow's move

By Julier Ludwig Jarmillano and Carlito Pablo

MALACAÑANG is unfazed by the move of Susan Roces to substitute for her late husband, Fernando Poe Jr., in the electoral protest he had filed against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"We do not want to speculate on the pleas of Susan Roces," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in an interview yesterday over dzBB radio.

The legal moves are filed by her or other lawyer. "She will be handled by our lawyers who will file the proper response before the Presidential Electoral Tribunal."

Ms Arroyo's election lawyer yesterday dismissed as having "no legal basis" Roces' petition to the PET to allow her to substitute for her husband in the electoral protest he had filed against Ms Arroyo over the results of the May 10, 2004, presidential election which he lost.

Romulo Macalintal said he had yet to discuss the development with Ms Arroyo but he would advise her to wait for the Supreme Court decision on Roces' protest before making any legal moves. The high court sits as the PET.

But personally, as an election lawyer, I believe there is no legal basis for Susan Roces to be the substitute in the protest," said Macalintal in a phone interview. He maintained that Poe's protest had died with him.

Macalintal cited the case of the late Cpl. Rolando Abadilla, who had filed an electoral protest against Rep. Benito Bay. Nonoy Akbay after losing congressional race. After Abadilla was ambushed and killed allegedly by communist assassins, his widow tried to pursue the protest.

Macalintal said the choice of Representative Electoral Tribunal (SRET) dismissed the petition, saying the protest was "personal to the protestant."

He said the SRET had ruled that with Abadilla's death, "there is no protest to speak of and no person or party can substitute for the deceased protestant." It further said that the widow could not substitute for her husband because "public office is personal to the incumbent."

Macalintal said Abbas's lawyer was none other than then Solicitor Jr., Poe's and Roces' lawyer in the electoral protest.

Macalintal said this made PET rules, only the presidential candidates who obtained the second or third highest number of votes could file an electoral protest.

He said Poe had specifically stated in his protest that all allegations contained there were of his "own personal knowledge."

"I would say really those who claim this qualification can file the protest," Macalintal said.

House Minority Leader Rep. Francis Escudero (NP, Sorsogon), Poe's campaign spokesperson, thinks otherwise.

"Yes," he said yesterday, when asked if he thought Roces had the legal personality to substitute for her late husband in his electoral protest.

Escudero, a lawyer, said the Supreme Court itself had laid down jurisprudence on the effect of the death of parties involved in electoral contests.

"An electoral protest is a proceeding imbued with public interest," Escudero said. "That public interest is carried when the court has ascertained who was the candidate really elected by the people."

Escudero said PET rules provided for a substitute in order for cases to proceed.

"Since it used to be Susan Roces' (SR) must be somebody who will be able to raise funds. It must be somebody who is serious in pursuing the case and not to subsequently," Escudero said.

Escudero said that while Susan had agreed to cut in for her late husband, this did not mean she was moving politics.

"Her continuation of the electoral protest doesn't mean that she will now become opposition or be a candidate in future elections," Escudero said.

Bunye said the move by Roces to substitute for her husband in the protest "is a private matter."

Bunye said the Palace "will not comment on the pleadings filed by the parties."

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Opposition still divided, says Angara

By Michael Lim Ubac

SUSAN Roces' move to substitute for her late husband, Fernando Poe Jr., in his election protest against President Macapagal-Arroyo has not stalled the political opposition.

Opposition stalwart Sen. Edgardo Angara made this clear yesterday as he said the decision that Poe's widow was not the de facto leader of the opposition.

Although it was Angara who announced Poe to run for President, the senator said what Roces was doing was "merely continuing the protest."

But whether she runs "gave the stellar opposition leader, that's another question, another matter," Angara said.

Angara said Roces' pursuit of the electoral protest of her late husband was "very personal to her."

"She was said that she doesn't want to get involved in politics; it's really a personal decision," he said.

Angara's comment in the opposition, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, said in a separate interview that Roces' role in the political opposition is now small and insignificant.

"First, we should define who the opposition is. He should first decide on who he wants to be opposition," said Lacson, who headed with Angara over the latter's choice of Poe as opposition standard-bearer in the May 10, 2004, elections.

SolGen, judge tangle in court over Naia 3 expropriation case

THE JUDGE presiding over the expropriation case the government filed against Philippine International Air Terminals Co. Inc. (Piatco) involving Naia Terminal 3 was not amused by the government's insistence that he inhibit himself from the case.

"Why do you want to file a motion if you just want me to inhibit myself?" Pasay City Regional Trial Court Judge Bonifacio Gingoyon yesterday asked Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo.

Benipayo, calling attention to the "irregular circumstances" surrounding the judge's order last week that the government pay Terminal 3 builder Piatco Ltd. million in partial compensation, had moved for the re-raffle of the case to another judge of the Pasay RTC.

Unfazed by Gingoyon's question, Benipayo replied, "That's why we filed a motion for inhibition."

He added that it was not the Office of the Solicitor General that decided that the case would be handled by Gingoyon.

Gingoyon on Jan. 4 directed the Land Bank of the Philippines-Ayala branch to immediately release P62.34 million to Piatco to be subsequently deducted from the amount of "just compensation" that Piatco is to be determined by the court. The DBG has also asked the court to reconsider this order.

Gingoyon issued the order after the government filed on Dec. 31 the expropriation case against Piatco in a bid to have the airport terminal finally open by June this year.

Benipayo questioned the judge's issuing the order from progress, or on his own, "without motion from any party, without notice to the OSG and without setting a hearing on the matter."

Benipayo also asked the court why no hearing was conducted regarding the appointment of three commissioners who will determine the real value of Terminal 3.

Gingoyon said that a public hearing to fix appointment of the three commissioners was not necessary in the same way that the government did not find it necessary to have a hearing in deciding to take over the terminal.

"No hearing was conducted [when a decision was made granting the writ of possession of the Terminal 3 to the government]," Gingoyon said. Nancy Gilmore-Carvajal

65 students crammed into a room? Yes and no

By Dona E. Pazolbuga

LOGAOEN Secretary Florencio Abad has denied that he is out on order increasing the class size in public schools to 65.

Abad had told reporters on Dec. 27 that he never gave the directive.

He also insisted he had no plans to cram more students into classrooms because of the chronic problem of classroom shortage.

"It does state of 65 is already too crowded. That's no longer conducive to learning," Abad had said.

It turned out that Abad ordered some of his subordinates to increase the maximum of 60 students in a class. However, the order, dated Dec. 13, was only issued last week.

Given the perennial problem of inadequate classrooms, class size shall range from a minimum of 55 pupils/students per class to a maximum of 65 pupils/students per class. The average class size shall be 50," Abad said in his Department Order 62 dated Dec. 13.

The Inquirer tried to contact Abad but he was still unavailable.

In the interim, Abad also made it a policy for all public elementary and high schools to go on "double shifts" to accommodate the increasing enrollment.

Starting June this year, public schools which have not yet gone to two shifts must now hold morning and afternoon classes.

Several public schools in Metro Manila have long resorted to two class shifts—some have as many as four shifts—resulting in shorter class hours.

During a luncheon with reporters on Dec. 27, Abad had admitted that because of the classroom shortage, some schools are cramming more students into one class. Public high schools in Baguio, for instance, had as many as 60 students in a class.

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Abad had insisted one of his undersecretaries "has challenged a maximum of 65 students in a class. However, the same Abad later said, "definitely [denied] that there was a directive for a bigger class size.

In April 2000, Abad's predecessor Edilberto de Jesus increased the maximum class size to 60, citing "immense constraints."

In June last year, the DepEd reported that it was short of 31,167 classrooms.

House leaders revive move to zap Senate, shift to unicameral system

By Carlito Pablo

LEADERS of the House of Representatives have revived proposals for a shift from the current bicameral to a unicameral or parliamentary system of government by amending the 1987 Constitution.

Led by Deputy Speaker for the Visayas Rep. Raul del Mar (Lahar, Cebu City), the lawmakers said that the need for change has been highlighted following the failure of last week's special session of Congress to ratify—even just one revenue measure, a shortcoming largely attributed to delays in legislation at the Senate.

Senate snag

"The Senate cannot remain indifferent to the way things are moving—or not moving...in the Senate," Del Mar said.

Del Mar said that the experience of the Jan. 5-7 special session "clearly shows a Senate failing to keep pace with the workings of the House."

"In the end, what we are compels the actions of not a few to be viewed in the direction of unicameralism, a unicameral legislative body as a solution...by way of constitutional amendment—in this kind of legislative structure," Del Mar said.

In a dedicated worded indictment of legislative delays in the Senate, Del Mar said that the adoption of a unicameral system will "avoid the wastage of time and effort put forth by a team bifurcation chamber."

Congress adjourned its special session in the evening of Jan. 7, three days after the House ratified the Senate approval of just one revenue measure in order for the next phase—bicameral conference committee proceedings—to commence.

Attrition bill

The Senate passed only the lateral attrition bill with no more time left for bicameral conference discussions, rendering the ratification by both chambers of a reconciled bill.

Majority Leader Rep. Prospero Nograles (Lahar, Davao City) took the perspective of international media using agencies in overseeing the outcome of the special session.

"In the United States, if, say, a Republican President has a Republican-dominated House and Senate, legislators will be a breeze," he said.

"In our case, both chambers of Congress are dominated by the administration and yet we're encountering problems with legislation. This is what international observers cannot comprehend," Nograles said.

Best argument

"What happened, therefore, during the special session is the best argument for a unicameral system of government. Why should the President deal with two chambers and two sets of leadership when one can have only legislature body?" Nograles said.

Rep. Constantino Jaraula (Lahar, Cagayan de Oro City) said that President Macapagal-Arroyo would not have needed to call for a special session had the Senate kept up with the House in legislative needs.

Jaraula, chair of the house committee on constitutional amendments, recalled that before the Christmas break, the House had passed on third and final reading two revenue measures—the lateral attrition bill and the proposed tax amnesty.

"Now if we have a unicameral body, these delays need not occur," he said.

More efficient

Rep. Eric Singson (LP, Ilocos Sur), vice chair of the House ways and means committee, said that the argument for a unicameral shift has been strengthened.

"Legislative work becomes more efficient if we have only one chamber," Singson said.

Deputy Majority Leader Rep. Eduardo Cojuangco (Lahar, Cebu) cautioned his colleagues who were pushing for a shift to unicameralism through Charter change.

"It might appear somehow such is only for constitutional amendments too soon. Suffice to say that the President was justified in calling for a special session," he said.

"Even if no bill was ratified, the Senate and House are obviously moved forward and this is still welcome news," Cojuangco said.

Del Mar said that for checks in legislation, primarily at the Senate, are "not totally unnecessary" in the current bicameral set-up.

"Historically, in every adjournment of Congress, no one bill by the House remaining enacted by the Senate," Del Mar said.

Del Mar noted that in the 12th Congress, there were 776 local bills and 216 national bills passed by the House but were not acted upon by the Senate.

Want to join the Jesuits?

THE JESUIT Priests and Brothers will hold a vocation seminar for male college students and young professionals on Jan. 23, 2005, Sunday. The seminar will be held at the Conference Room-Penthouse of the Mabuti Citadel Inn at 1807 B Bonifacio St., Mabuti City, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Registration is free, for details, those interested may call 426-6181 and ask for any member of the Vocation Promotion Team. Or, you may send an e-mail to vocjesuit@mla.com or vocjesuit@info.edu.ph. Or, you may send a text message to 0927-5496119 or 0927-5496067.

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Nurses, teachers warned anew . . .

Front page, A1

The Department of Labor and Employment yesterday issued anew its warning against unlicensed recruitment agencies.

The different recruiters collected placement fees from 70 nurses and teachers for jobs in US hospitals and schools, the DOLE said, citing reports from the Presidential Anti-Illegal Recruitment Task Force.

Taking advantage

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said illegal recruiters were taking advantage of the Philippines' standing as an emerging source of teachers for US public schools in this part of the year.

Sto. Tomas said that aspiring groups and individuals would face hopeful applicants into paying huge sums for jobs abroad, particularly in the United States, which has job openings for health workers and teachers.

In October last year, 41 victims, who were assured of jobs in the United States, reported to the task force that they had lost some P4.8 million to illegal recruiters.

Another 19 teachers lost more than P1.8 million to Stolen Step Professional Service after it promised to give them jobs in various US schools, the DOLE said.

In dollars

Each of the teachers paid Garcia between $24,000 and $25,000 as placement fee. Two even gave him in dollars: $1,500 and $4,200. Garcia was arrested last year.

A certain Julie Lorner, who was also nabbed by task force agents, collected almost P3 million from nine Filipinos who wanted to work as caregivers in the United States. The victims paid between $13,000 and $360,000 for misrepresentation.

Seven Filipino nurses each paid $1,200 to two illegal recruiters, aimed, fled to Sierra Tobog-ong Pueblo de la Cruz, who promised to place them in US hospitals. The two, who were arrested shortly before Christmas, had collected P750,000 from their victims.

Top exporter of nurses

The Philippines is the No. 1 exporter of nurses in the world, with the United States, United Kingdom and Middle East as the top destinations of the health workers.

"The DOLE is always prepared to assist overseas job applicants in verifying employment documents," Sto. Tomas said in a statement yesterday.

She said the Philippine Overseas Labor Office in Washington D.C. has already established the employment circumstances of 188 would-be overseas Filipino workers and allowed 31 principals and employers in four Filipino teachers' favor.

The labor secretary advised those who want to work in the United States to first check the permits of recruitment agencies with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

The Philippines deployed some 6,000 OFWs last year, which is a mere 0.2 percent increase from 2003 figures.

Task force rescues 15 jobseekers

[illegible] women, recruited from the provinces for nonexistent jobs in Japan, were rescued last week by the Presidential Anti-Illegal Recruitment Task Force (PARTF) under Executive Director Reynaldo Aquio.

According to a press statement issued by the office of Sec. Aquino Pimentel Jr., the victims were rescued during a raid on the office of Getsie Wayo Manpower International Corp. at 8024 Lipan St., Sta. Ana, Manila on Dec. 4.

PARTF assistant Elsa Bevangar Bonchoin, 30, a registered nurse of the recruitment firm testified presented to display the women in negros and dancers to Japan, lady in pitched.

The rescue operation was conducted by the task force upon the request of Pimentel in response to complaints from parents of four of the victims, whose ages ranged from 18 to 22.

The statement identified the accused recruiter from Villanueva, Misamis Oriental, as Annamae Abode Arbalieo, Emily Rebalieo Buenaventa, Illana Elsie Rebalieo Benitezdo and Fedilyn Zayas.

Also arrested were Catherine Ai la Cunta, Rosie Golda, Ma. Bayolar Chin, Arbilia Dinata Pagbilaran, Aylyn alo Tayao, Cindy Mateo Hallenosa, Irene Ann Bonchoin, Ma. Estanislao Indros, Bernene Bonilla, Israel Lingo and Elizabeth Limpo.

The victims from Villanueva were allegedly recruited by recruiter Bob in Bacolod, a resident of Davao, and brought to Manila on June 30, 2004.

On Dec. 26, 2004, Bobaco, one of the recruits, secretly called up her parents in Davao, pleading to be rescued as they were being treated like prisoners in their agency.

Pimentel commended Aquio and members of the PARTF and, ing team for quickly responding to his request and for the role we out of the victims of illegal job recruitment.

Task force officers are available to [illegible] and criminal charges were being prepared against Elsa Bonchoin for violations of the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 (Republic Act No. 8042), anti-Child Abuse Act (RA 7610) and anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (RA 9208).

The raiding team was led by Chief Insp. Eusebio Arevalo, Jr., Chief Insp. Bernardo Pilo, Sr. Insp. Cesar Pascua and PO2 Gonzalo Ipolac.

Rosebud-Mike fight over money, Ping charges

Front page, A1

[illegible] ing finished out.

The reunion, which was interviewed by reporters prior to yesterday's session, also made a subtle "Ang mata ko ngayon ay mayroon ang aray nila. Sana lang maging ang aray ko rin sa [illegible] end, sana lang ayaw, parehas pero iba-iba ang [illegible] ko na [illegible] ng [illegible] ng [illegible] ng

Mild quake sends Taal volcano island folk fleeing in panic

A MILD earthquake beneath a small volcano in Taal Lake in Batangas triggered fears of a possible eruption or eruption but officials on Monday said there was no sign of any danger.

The quake with a magnitude of about 2.0 on the Richter scale shook the volcanic island of Taal at about 7:45 p.m. Saturday, causing some of the 5,000 residents to flee, officials said.

The island residents, however, began to return on Monday afternoon, said.

Florante Monteclaro, mayor of Talisay City where many had sought refuge, said "there have been gradually answered by all the news of the tremors that hit South Asia so they were very cautious about any volcanoes."

The quake under Taal volcano, on an island lake some 60 kilometers south of Metro Manila, was volcanic in origin but did not mean an eruption was imminent, said the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

"At the moment, there are no immediate signs we can relate to an impending eruption," said Raul Bruselas, the chief volcanologist of the institute.

Bruselas said there were no signs of increased steam being emitted by the volcano or of increased temperature at the crater in the volcano's center—two indicators of a coming eruption.

The 311-meter high volcano last erupted in 1977 but caused little damage. Its last deadly eruption in 1965 killed 200 people, the institute's records showed. AFP

TSUNAMI DEFENSE

RP has lost 75% of its mangroves

By Cathlica Pablo

"THE COUNTRY has lost 75 percent of its natural armor against tsunamis—the mangroves.

Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri (Lakas, Bukidnon) said that from 450,000 hectares of mangroves in 1918, mangrove cover along coastal areas has declined to 118,000 ha.

From 1951 to 1998, some 379,000 ha of mangroves were cut down to make way for fishponds, Zubiri said.

Aside from conversion to fish pond areas, mangroves are also being dominated by salon trees used gatherers and charcoal makers.

"In terms of mangrove size, the Philippines comes next after China and Indonesia in fourth east Asia, the region which once had a third of the world's mangrove area," Zubiri said.

He also said that as a result of the destruction of mangroves, some 30 tree species, 91 fish species and 20 bird species are threatened due to the loss of their natural habitat along the country's coastlines.

Zubiri undertook a review of the state of the country's mangroves following published findings that the loss of lives and property in Aceh, he could have been mitigated had the latter's mangrove cover not been destroyed in past years.

COASTAL forest will serve as a shield against tsunamis.

Zubiri called for massive mangrove planting "for the purpose of building a ribbon of coastal forests that will serve as a tsunami shield in this quake-prone country."

"The re-mangrovingg of coastal areas will not only provide the 40k coastal tourist—half of the Philippines' coast...with natural sense breakers but also create fish sanctuaries and wildlife sanctuaries as well," he said.

Zubiri also pointed out that mangroves as their organic pollution by trapping and absorbing toxins.

"They are nature's best water purifiers," he said.

Zubiri said that it is not only rural coastal areas which must engage in mangrove reforestation but Manila as well.

"Mangroves are part of our culture. The province city Manila was named after 'nilad,' a mangrove specie. Let us bring them back, this time with the added purpose of making them our armor against tsunamis," he said.

Zubiri said that Sri Lankan as well as Thai officials have expressed misgivings about the loss of mangroves in their tsunami-devastated countries.

"The Philippines should heed the cautionary tale of [the] Dec. 26 [tsunami disaster] by making mangroves part of the coastal development again," he said.

Zubiri said that there a "troubling set," mangroves must now start "regrowing not felled/lost."

To fund the initiative, Zubiri recommended that "most commonly ported" of the P9.6 billion environmental environment through new lot revenues be allocated for mangrove reforestation.

Zubiri said this project will also provide employment for those who will build mangrove plantations.

Justice quits Estrada trial

[illegible]

Sandoval, dean of the first division, which the Supreme Court created more than two years ago to try Estrada, announced his resignation shortly after the morning prayer, soothing court officials as well as prosecution and defense lawyers by surprise.

He said he had already written a letter of resignation to the Supreme Court and was awaiting its approval this week. Sandoval, however, remained silent at the second division of the anticipated court.

After saying his reasons for quitting, he moved to postpone the hearing.

Sandoval became the third head of a division trying Estrada to have resigned.

The third division, then under retired presiding Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez, had initially heard Estrada's plunder and perjury charges before the high tribunal created the special division. The Supreme Court had ordered him to go on [illegible] in December 2003.

Reward

Sandiganbayan Justice Minita Chico-Nazario was named chair of the special division in 2002. It was Nazario who approved Estrada's trip to the United States on Dec. 21, 2003. She was succeeded by Associate Justices led by De Castro.

Following the approval of Estrada's request to travel abroad on Dec. 3, 2004, Mukundan appointed Nazario to the Supreme Court, causing heads of justices from the private prosecutors' office said that the promotion was a reward for Nazario who had dealt with the resolution.

Even after approving Estrada's trip to Hong Kong, De Castro voted to extend Sandiganbayan hearings in the penultimate [illegible].

Private prosecutors had claimed that the promotion of Nazario and De Castro to jury posts were rewards for allowing Estrada to undergo knee-replacement surgery abroad and to stay in his rest house in Tanay, Rizal.

Alarmed

Prosecution star witness and Estrada's estranged friend, Bonifacio Gon Lois "Boni" Singson, said he was surprised by the turn of events.

"I am saddened by the news and I'm alarmed by what's happening to the judicial system of this country," said Singson, who last month also lashed out at the government for allowing Estrada to leave for Hong Kong.

Singson had told prosecutors that Estrada had pocketed some P4.5 billion in illegal wealth during his 30 months in office. He said the ex-President also ran a protection racket on an illegal numbers game called jueteng.

Singson's revelations led to Estrada's impeachment in late 2000, and eventually his removal from office.

The deposed President was later convicted over the corruption allegations and faces life in prison or even the death penalty if convicted.

Special Prosecutor Jeanna Villa-Ignacio said he was going to miss Sandoval because he had "taken the lead in the prosecution on many significant cases," like the house arrest issue and the trip to Hong Kong.

Private prosecutor Leonard de Vera gave this reaction: "Incumbent court judges like reversing lower rulings and promotions (Estrada's) ally abroad would engender in the hearts of many, including Justice Sandoval, that these may be patterns of things to come, definitely not encouraging for the sake of the prosecution."

Defense lawyer Jose Flaminiano refused to speculate on Sandoval's decision to quit, but said he should have waited until the Supreme Court had acted on his resignation letter so as not to disrupt the ongoing trial.

Supreme Court spokesperson Jamsul Khan Ali said the high court would have to approve Sandoval's resignation.

Humiliated

Defense lawyers said Sandoval's resignation had long been in the air.

"He humiliated him and he told us that he would resign if not appointed Chief Sandiganbayan presiding Justice," defense lead counsel Rene Saguisag said of their meeting in Antipolo in November after Nazario was approved to the Supreme Court and Sandoval was named to her previous post as Sandiganbayan presiding justice in an acting capacity.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said Sandoval resigned because he was not named presiding justice of the Sandiganbayan last month.

"He probably felt that he was humiliated because he was not appointed presiding justice. So that, out of dissatisfaction, he should resign. This has happened before in the Court of Appeals ... but it is the prerogative of the President to appoint the presiding justice," Gonzalez said.

He said Sandoval should have not felt bad about being overruled by his fellow justices in the special division.

"That does not mean anything. That is a function of the judicial process. Why should he feel bad because his dissenting views?" Gonzalez said.

"Great justice were often with the minority. Chief Justice (Claudio) Teehankee was with the minority during the martial law years," he said.

Fair to all

In his impromptu talk after announcing his resignation, Sandoval said he was happy that the prosecution panel had brought the matter of Estrada's trip to Hong Kong to the Supreme Court.

He said the move would "settle jurisprudence" and that he was leaving it up to the high tribunal and, latterly to "render the proper verdict."

"To everybody, I believe sides, I shall just remain to the second division complement with the thought that I have done my best and have been fair to all," he said.

But Sandoval's move did not sit well with the defense lawyers, who pointed out that Chief Justice Hilario Davide would effect Sandoval's resignation would affect the Supreme Court an assessment of his stay in Hong Kong from Jan. 15 to Jan. 23.

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, who is back in the country from Hong Kong, had asked for a similar extension.

Interviewed after the hearing, the young Estrada said the delay was thing protective as an appeal motion for the court to resolve the two issues immediately.

In the absence of a resolution, the elder Estrada will have to return to the country when the deadline for his trip expires on Jan. 23, according to Saguisag.

But then, he said, the former President might stay beyond the court's deadline if his doctors decide that the injections would adversely affect his newly replaced knee.

Hectic schedule

Nothing, prepared us for this shocking development," Saguisag said, adding that the entry of a new justice would set back the hearing from two weeks to a month.

Prior to announced his resignation to put, Sandoval did not do a

IN THE KNOW

Justices in Estrada's plunder case:

April 4, 2001: Case No. 26558 or the plunder case against deposed President Joseph Estrada is assigned to the Sandiganbayan's third division headed by Justice Francisco Ibañez after a raffle.

Jan. 21, 2002: Supreme Court designates Associate Justice Minita Chico-Nazario to be head of the "special division" that will take over Estrada's cases.

Aug. 12, 2004: The Supreme Court appoints Justice Catalino Tantoco to be head the Sandiganbayan special division which is handling the plunder case of Estrada.

EMBARRASSED with BAD BREATH?

No more 'Mr. Suave' ring tone

[illegible]

pointed him to the autograph room on March 11, 1986.

He was the examiner in re-instated law in the 1993 bar exams and in legal ethics in the 1998 bar exams. He wrote two books : "Primer on Criminal Law" and the "Revised Penal Code Book II."

Born on June 30, 1941 in Bicol, Nicaragua, he graduated from his law studies at the Far Eastern University in Manila in 1963. He was the class valedictorian.

Sandoval served as the regional trial court judge in Pinamalayan, Oriental Mindoro, before then President Corazon Aquino transferred him to Manila on May 6, 1986.

He taught criminal law and was a law reviewer in Manila's top law schools, including Ateneo de Manila University, San Beda College, Arellano University, PLM, Manuel L. Quezon University, University of Santo Tomas, University of Manila and the Bienvenido ng Lung sod ng Manila.

He is married to Milagros Sandoval, an elementary school principal. They have three children.

The parents were both public school teachers—Epifanio and Francisca Sandoval.

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ENTERTAINMENT

ANGEL Aquino

Phil Cousin

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AFP

For the critics, it's Eastwood movie

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The group here favourite also chose Hilary Swank as Best Actress. Swank starts in the movie as an up and coming boxer.

She shared the award with British actress Imelda Staunton, who won for her role in the sitcom drama "Vera Drake," set in 1950s Britain.

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nkin has also won by Guillermo Arriaga, was named Best Foreign Film.

Thomas Haden Church and Virginia Madsen were chosen as Best Supporting Actor and Actress respectively for their roles in "Sideways."

The 36 members of the group, organized by Founded in 1966, gather each year at a New York City hotel to make their decisions.

AFP

From fear to 'yuk!' factor

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WHEN "Fear Factor" started telecasting, it was a physical competition that showed much of its excitement from challenges involving strength, stamina, determination and fortitude—in other words, mainly the contestants' skills, and not much else.

Then, viewers realized the contestants' courage, control, and ability to triumph over their fears.

After some months, however, viewers got used to the physical challenges, and their attention level dipped. So the show had to up the ante in terms of less physical tests, and brought into play what could be called the "yuk" factor.

From fear to "yuk" factor—that's quite a stretch, and a key shift that has radically changed the character of the show.

Aside from coping with the regulation physical challenges, contestants now have to eat all sorts of gross stuff, be covered with thousands of bees, or swarms of tarantulas, or be doused in a bath of snakes or scorpions—etc.!

The tests have become so self-parody that some viewers have been protesting. Such activity, say the commissioners, have acted cruelly, and have instead simply harbored misery and hit the ballot—or why insect, or empowering natural body part.

Trouble is, these tests are so much disliked, from monitoring these fears by

Additional Newspapers

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And "Mondovich," a movie about besieged about female general mo-

nkin has also won by Guillermo Arriaga, was named Best Foreign Film.

Thomas Haden Church and Virginia Madsen were chosen as Best Supporting Actor and Actress respectively for their roles in "Sideways."

The 36 members of the group, organized by Founded in 1966, gather each year at a New York City hotel to make their decisions.

AFP

From fear to 'yuk!' factor

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WHEN "Fear Factor" started telecasting, it was a physical competition that showed much of its excitement from challenges involving strength, stamina, determination and fortitude—in other words, mainly the contestants' skills, and not much else.

Then, viewers realized the contestants' courage, control, and ability to triumph over their fears.

After some months, however, viewers got used to the physical challenges, and their attention level dipped. So the show had to up the ante in terms of less physical tests, and brought into play what could be called the "yuk" factor.

From fear to "yuk" factor—that's quite a stretch, and a key shift that has radically changed the character of the show.

Aside from coping with the regulation physical challenges, contestants now have to eat all sorts of gross stuff, be covered with thousands of bees, or swarms of tarantulas, or be doused in a bath of snakes or scorpions—etc.!

The tests have become so self-parody that some viewers have been protesting. Such activity, say the commissioners, have acted cruelly, and have instead simply harbored misery and hit the ballot—or why insect, or empowering natural body part.

Trouble is, these tests are so much disliked, from monitoring these fears by

The WORLD

Edited by Lawrence B. Ibasco

Abbas wins Palestinian polls; hopes for peace talks raised

RAMALLAH, West Bank—The victory of Mahmoud Abbas in Palestinian elections raised hopes on Monday for reviving talks with Israel after the relative moderate won a landslide in the vote to succeed Yasser Arafat.

In another sign of change in the Middle East, a new Israeli government rose objected to take office with a mission to give up occupied lands, uprooting Jewish settlers for the first time from some land where Palestinians want to come.

But any optimism for a new era of diplomacy will still be cautious. He is militant defying Abbas' call to end armed struggle. Meanwhile, neither Palestinians nor Israelis show room for compromise on fundamental issues behind decades of conflict.

Abbas claimed victory on Sunday after exit polls showed he had won 65 percent of the vote in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, on top a margin as any hosts expected.

Turnout looked healthy despite a boycott call by Islamic militants, strengthening his mandate for change.

He had promised to seek peace with Israel, but also to battle widespread corruption and restore the crumbling Palestinian authority—the legacy of four years of debilitating violence and Arafat's chaotic rule.

"Victory is beautiful but it will be more beautiful to fulfill the pledges," said Abbas, candidate of the dominant Fatah movement. "The noblest jihad [holy struggle] is over and the biggest jihad is ahead."

Final election results are expected on Monday and Abbas is due to be sworn in on Wednesday, officials said. The closest of six other candidates was pro-democracy activist Mustafa Barghouthi with about 20 percent of the vote.

International monitors said the ballot appeared to have been fair despite some Israeli restrictions on movement.

US President George W. Bush praised the elections as an important step to statehood and offered Abbas his help in a new push for peace, while calling on Israel to improve the humanitarian situation for Palestinians.

Israel sees Abbas as a man to do business with, but has criticized his intention to co-opt rather than confront militants and insists on an end to Palestinian attacks before real discussion of statehood.

The militant Islamic group Hamas said it would work with Abbas, but questioned his real margin of victory.

Fighters sent a clear message of strength during the election by firing rockets into Israel.

"The main challenges are still ahead. Will he fight against terrorists and try to stop the bloods are against the men of Israel?" said Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's deputy Ehud Olmert.

Israeli officials have said that Sharon, who escaped scathe of harassing violence and shunned him for years, would seek a meeting with Abbas in days. But Abbas aides said he wanted assurances that it would be more than a photo opportunity. *Reuters*

SUPPORTERS of Mahmoud Abbas celebrate under a huge portrait of their presidential candidate after the close of voting in the West Bank city of Ramallah Jan. 9. AFP

Victims of Gulf War overpaid by $5 billion by UN, auditors find

GENEVA—The United Nations overpaid by as much as $5 billion to individuals, companies and Gulf states for losses in Iraq's 1990 invasion and occupation of Kuwait, auditors' documents showed on Tuesday.

The 19 internal auditors of the UN Compensation Commission (UNCC) were poised on its website a day before a total of 56 audits were to be made public by an independent panel of the former UN Federal Reserve chair Paul Volcker.

Senior UNCC officials strongly denied any overpayments and dismissed the auditors' conclusions, saying they had exercised their mandate by delving into legal issues.

Volcker's panel is investigating the oil-for-food program that the United Nations operated for Saddam Hussein's Iraq before the country was under international sanctions. The US Congress is probing alleged corruption in the programme.

The 19 audits of the Switzerland UNCC, carried out by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) from July 1997 to December 2004, do not identify any corruption.

But the audits raised questions, mainly about payments to approving people for damages, and double-dipping payments had been made. Along with exchange rate and other issues, the audits point at a total overpayment of some $5 billion, officials said.

The UNCC said it had issued the audits after being ripped the Volcker panel was going to make them public without including the UNCC's responses to each audit's findings.

"Our goal is to show that the Office of Internal Oversight Services' audits have been unduly withheld," said UNCC deputy executive secretary Mike Saltzman.

"Since we are not part of oil-for-food, we are in a fair as to why these documents were given to the Volcker committee."

The UNCC also received some falsehood decision by UN legal counsel Hans Corell, who ruled in December 2002 that UN auditors had gone "beyond the proper scope of audit" by trying to inspect legal issues.

The UNCC was set up by the UN Security Council in 1991 to compensate individuals, companies and governments for losses from Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait.

It has received claims totaling $350 billion and to date has approved $51.4 billion in compensation.

Compensation is awarded after receipt of reports examine claims and make recommendations on payment. These amounts must be endorsed by the UNCC's Governing Council, comprising the same 15 members elected to the Security Council.

"The Governing Council has consistently taken the position that administrative decisions are not within the purview of the OIOS auditors," said UNCC spokesperson Joe Sills. *Reuters*

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US troops kill Iraq civilians 'by mistake'

BAGHDAD—US troops mistakenly killed two Iraqi policemen and two bystanders near a checkpoint just hours after an American warplane targeted a heavy stallion left when it bombed the wrong house, Iraqi officials said on Sunday.

The back-to-back incidents on Saturday fueled anti-American anger over the deaths of innocents during a raging insurgency just eleven months before Iraq's first democratic US-led force toppled Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Residents said 14 people, including children, were killed in a strike in the northern village of Asqlan. They showed relatives 14 freshly dug graves. The military, making a rare admission of error in its fight against guerrillas, said five people died when a 500-pound bomb destroyed the house.

Shortly afterwards, a US military convoy was hit by a roadside bomb in Iskan area a police checkpoint south of Baghdad in a location area known as the "Triangle of Death."

Troops manning the vehicles struck back but at the wrong target, interior ministry spokesperson Adnan Abdul-Rahman said. Two police officers and two civilians were killed. He said a fifth Iraqi suffered a heart attack and died at the scene.

The military expressed regret and launched an investigation into the bombing in Asqlan, near the tourist city of Mosul, but had no immediate comment on the convoy incident. Reuters

Many Iraqis voiced resentment at what they call heavy-handed military tactics and collateral damage in the run-up to crucial elections next month. Insurgent chaos has deterred US officers in vast swaths and attacks and get like security behind the lines. Al-Jaffar.

"Why did these poor people have to die?" lamented Baghdad taxi driver Emad Abdul Khaliq, 26. "Bombing, shooting and running a tank over cars have all become something normal."

US officials insist American forces do their utmost to avoid civilian casualties but have said insurgents trying to disrupt the election stand many attacks from populated areas. Reuters

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Heating up

THE RECENT tsunami disaster, the fatal heat wave in Europe in 2003 and the stronger and more violent storms that have hit various parts of the earth in the past four or five years should set the world thinking about the abrupt climate and geological changes and what could be done about them.

Scientists are agreed: Global warming and climate change are no longer in the realm of conjecture hereonto; they are very much upon us. Among the signs of these changes are:

EDITORIAL

- The heating up of the world—the temperature has risen 1 degree F over the past century. The 1990s was the warmest decade and 1998 was the warmest year on instrumental record.
- The melting of glaciers and breaking up of ice shelves. Snow covers and ice extent have decreased by about 10 per cent since the late 1960s.
- The rise in sea level. The rate of global average sea level rise during the 20th century is in the range of 1 to 2 millimeters per year, with a central value of 1.5 cm/a year.
- Increase in global ocean heat content since the late 1950s, the period for which adequate observation of subsurface ocean temperatures have been available.
- A shift in seasons: shorter winters, the earlier arrival of spring, hotter summers and fiercer heat waves and the later arrival of autumn. (The heat wave in Europe in 2003 killed 35,000 people.)
- Longer periods of drought. Warmer episodes of El Niño have been more frequent, persistent and intense since the mid-1970s, compared with the previous 100 years.
- The drying up of rivers and streams, shrinking of lakes and the erosion of the coasts.
- The bleaching and dying of coral reefs, depriving fish of habitats. 1998 was the worst year on record, when 16 per cent of the world's coral was left bleached or dead.
- Changes in the natural kingdom: habitats change, plants flower earlier; birds nest earlier; exotic species appear and amphibians are disappearing.
- The fast spread of diseases.
- Changes in the intensity and frequency of storms. Conflicting analyses, however, make it difficult to draw definitive conclusions, especially on extra-tropical or hurricane activity.

These data are telling scientists—and us—that the earth is definitely heating up and that climate is changing. Scientists agree that the burning of fossil fuels like oil and coal causes greenhouse gases to escape into the air and these gases are causing most of the global warming. Another major cause is deforestation, for trees absorb carbon dioxide, one of the greenhouse gases, from the air.

Global warming is very difficult to solve. It is very easy to say that everyone should use less energy, but a growing, developing world requires the use of more energy, and fossil fuels, particularly at this time.

The problem is not even a start toward the solutions of the problem. It would require the parties to individual, legally binding targets to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. But although 84 countries signed the protocol, indicating that they intended to ratify it, many were reluctant to do so and thus bring it into force. One of the reluctant countries is the United States which should be exercising moral and political leadership in solving global warming but is not.

Even the Kyoto Protocol does not offer the ultimate solution. Jeremy Makhiwan of the US National Center for Atmospheric Research said that controlling the increase in greenhouse gas emissions "would take 40 successful Kyotos. But we've got tools to."

A long-term solution would be a fundamental change in the way the world powers its economy, shifting from uncontrolled use of fossil fuels to an increased and more efficient use of renewable sources of energy such as the sun, wind, water, waves and the heat coming from the bowels of the earth (geothermal).

The way has been pointed out by the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 with the adoption of Agenda 21, a wide-ranging blueprint for action to achieve sustainable development. Although Agenda 21 has been watered down by negotiation and compromise, it is considered the most comprehensive and effective program of action approved by the international community.

Global warming and climate and geological change have become very urgent and immediate social and personal concerns, as the shocking death tolls from the horrific tsunami, fierce storms, massive floods and long droughts have testified. The world cannot wait for the oceans to boil or for hell to freeze over before all nations join hands in taking aggressive action on global warming. It has to start now.

'Runyon's Law'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

DID "Runyon's Law" trigger the random shots marauding Cebu casinos over a murder involving an officers' club leader who packs political clout?

Perched on his off-Times Square Algonquin Round, New York journalist Damon Runyon wrote his "law" by dusting off frontrunners' tag "there is not always to the swift...but the battle is the strong," and adding: "But that's the way to bet."

So, did Judge Jaime Santayana, Brigade Commander Generoso Labra, Anselmo Cadiendo and former Lee Cuko Ji lee on "Runyon's Law"? They bailed out from trying the Philippine Retirement Ministration Association's Ruben Ecleo Jr. for killing his wife Anna Ramirez.

Under our constitutional system, courts stand against any winds that blow, as a haven or refuge for those who otherwise suffer intense fury are helpless, weak or outmanned," US Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black wrote. But the five frightened themselves from trying Ecleo's "Supreme Master."

None will admit attempts to subvert them. *He knew they didn't "shelter's own."* Bloody anecdotes, however, dog doubt inserted in daily rites. A gunman massacred all but a handful of the medical family therefor assassin posted down After Sea. Rita Nonpet, a public lady lawyer also pronounced below.

The PBMA dismissed the suggestion the Ecleo clinic, Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña, moves as the disclaimers.

Last December, police interrupted eight PBMA members with Armalites, shotguns, grenades—and BMW uniforms and top Ecleoites. They were heading toward Clarendon area to be guest speaker. Most spotted PBMA rings. But they denied knowing each other. Another did they explain how they got in the same van, headed for the same place. The PBMA disowned the hooded volunteers it was this. But it kept the Ecleo clinic center in by revoking "Guns, Goons, Gold—And God," written by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism's Marites Dañguilan Vitug.

Then, Ecleo's supporters—of the subdivision, Ecleo's defenses guest now budgets the lady judge to back off. Bong should imbibe other "she deserved him" by denouncing some powerful officers, the defense argues.

"Living in These Judges." But State Daily hastened to report that the bourgeoned fear of the Philippines expected to another substitute trial. There was nothing overlooked in the judge to allow for Ecleo to stay. Judge Santayana, she JBP said. "To give in...would mean the defense got what they have been reaching for: to keep for a friendly judge and ultimately to trouble the hearing of this case outside Cebu. We were not born yesterday."

The Supreme Court, in fact, recently dismissed a score of corrupt judges and clerk, prosecutors in Cebu. One lady lawyer "has not Law" spin-off. The Court fired RTC Branch 60 Judge Adoracion Angeles for handily convicting Lee Kuan, a "ball guy," Cedric Daywalt—for of the Hun. As "confessed" to having helped murder Ecleo's wife. He pinned the blame on the wife's mother. If his testimony is upheld, the "master" would go free.

Then, there is the multi-billion dollar Yuchengco family and other cases, despite an earlier Court resolution barring him from handling new charges. The outfit supported the JBP's protest that Ecleo and public prosecutors from "there was a pending, and highly publicized, petition to disqualify" Judge Angeles before another court. The "interdiction" was scrapped.

Cebuano want a "law enforcers." A "judge with balls" was the newsworthy line admiring compliments paid to martyr Cecilia Muñoz Palma. Her son had been a victim of Marcos-era thugs.

Sandiganbayan's Teresita Leonardo de Castro is a just one option. She struck down Estrella Estrada-Ejercito's bid to hang on to the comfort lofty be at the Supreme Court's Justice Monday. Like Estrada, Ejercito's father was Ronnie Ejercito, Cojuangcos and nine others face a P4.6-billion graft charge.

Many are keeping their fingers crossed that Erap will maneuver up to that verdict of tough women judges. "A good woman," the Pampanga province's Lolo Amang Rodrigo says, "is hard to find."

E-mail: juan_mercado@pdi.net.ph

Words

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

"YOURS, I offer you a choice of life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life and show you and your descendants will live."

The words are from Deuteronomy, and they pertain to the Quezon dog-pit's indictment of government for the deaths in Quezon last December.

"While there was heavy rainfall," a statement signed by Bishop Bolando Tirona, his predecessor Jesse Mercado and 26 priests said, "the deaths would not have happened if heavy rainfall had not taken place. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines and different groups had been campaigning against logging in the Sierra Madre for many years now. The government, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and local government officials did not listen.... 'We should no longer allow the irresponsible use of the environment for the gain of a few individuals and the unrelated development agendas of the government and some private sectors.'"

The group called for the prosecution of the loggers and the government officials who approved their contracts.

The gist the Province of Isabela has spoken on this. I was beginning to think it would go the route of other tragedies, things this country tends to accept without question or become wise, with no small help from government which has a habit of unreasonably expiring the public to "move on" after tragedies occur. Or indeed after worshipping the heroes with the language of damage control.

Good of the words of that language is "sustain." Not after the word "natural" or "disaster," and you're home free. The dead, or their kin, have no one to blame but God, fate, or bad luck, depending on their religious disposition, or lack of it. The three stories that visited Quezon Province might have been brought by Satyrs—though even there, from the perspective of a modern-day global climate precipitated by global warming, they may not have been entirely so—but their effects were brought by human hand.

The deaths in Quezon Province were not just caused by human, they were caused by loggers. It wasn't the winds that howled and the rains that fell in a storm on Infanta and environs that killed hundreds of their residents, it was the logs that rumbled down the mountains that swelled them in their wake. The pictures has every reason to be furious. Those logs damned the life of one of their sons, Fr. Charlito Galendez.

I had been wondering for some time when the carnage would come. Since we gotten so inured to deaths, whether from violence wrought by people, that we agree so easily to let go and build on the bleached bones of the dead? How we gotten so used to the sight of pain and suffering, particularly when masked by one tragedy happening on top of the other, even as the counterfeit is so vastly we are not alone to have deaths in the family—others are worse off than we? How we gotten so weak and resigned and voiceless that we surrender our wills so easily to the interests of plutocrats and bourgeoisies?

The deaths in Infanta are not just economic, they are a crime. Counterpoint are united by capital, crimes are rendered by justice.

By speaking out against the crime, the priests and bishops are saying I would like that deaths be quickly handled alone, whose effect is to bury the dead in the next news over. That is the word "illegal," especially as affixed to "logging." By bringing in "illegal" logging, government has been implicated, or tried implicitly to, the true criminals in this case, which are the legal loggers, made so by the dominions they carry from the DENR. Can anything be more ridiculous than attributing the sins of logs that fell down the mountains and washed up to the sea to the infamous activities of "illegal" loggers? Can anything be more idiotic than suggesting that the solution to that is to add more checkpoints to catch the hooligans and illegal loggers? Is there any reason why the indigenous folk who operate on the forest floor, the logging teams, and others feed on them—and punish them "to the full extent of the law"?

The evidence is plain for all to see. The only thing worse than injury is death added to it. The only thing worse than death is murder. The only thing worse than murder is the murderer getting away.

And finally, I am glad the priests on Quezon are not because of yet another word that government has been using to bury the crime, along with the dead, in the unmarked graves. That word is "grounds," or as the parliament calls it, "drawing the agenda." All government has had to do in the past is accuse Union Bk. this is terror grounds, or national, and crushing poverty, and everything is made all right. Negotiate like that are the price we pay to grow, develop or indeed survive as a community people and nation.

Well, they are an unacceptable price to pay for the wrong people are paying it. The death of Quezon's dog-pit is not going to be the last we hear of that kind of grounds and development. The death of an entire community is a death too far, I say that in particular because hearts had the last month been shocked on to the dead of Quezon than government began talking of the possibility of opening mining to foreign capital. I said it before, that is all very well, but first let Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and Mike Defensor and their cabal put their money where their mouths are, or their lives where their words are, and live in the midst of the mines before the air of the thing they call safe. Otherwise it's just more people's fortunes growing and developing on the contracted and deactivation of the sensitive ability of the rest of the nation.

These are words and there are words, some of which are better left unsaid. Nothing from others. Dostoevsky's are one of the finest. Choose life, and you and your descendants will live. Choose death, and, well, just make sure the right people end up in that state.

GMA order for info on 'meningo' timely

IT'S almost time that President Macapagal-Arroyo lifted the order to the Department of Health to conduct a massive information campaign on meningitis. I suspect the lid on medical vaults by DOH has been kept shut about this sickness. It has yet exercise in the dark as to how it's caught and how to avoid it, how to recognize symptoms and what to do and refrain from to contain the sickness. It's like we're left to our own devices in this area of health. We hope the government doesn't want to shroud the people. Not as in the AMPI episode, it's better to take the load by the horns. That's how we were able to bread off GARI.

All the "meningo" cases being reported cannot be ignored. A total of 150 cases are being monitored in Cebu's, while one death has occurred in each three provinces, with the person said to have died in Cebu City. The Cebu City health office reported 10 cases in various places in Bel Mall's, apart from Baguio, which has been declared a calamity area, as well as Mindanao.

• • •

The opposition yesterday filed a motion before the Supreme Court seeking to substitute acting Solicitor General for her late husband as petitioner in his electoral protest. The 1998 election protest is being heard by the SC en banc. Arguing that the action won't benefit from the substitution in any legal manner inasmuch as the late never a candidate. The lawyer said it's supreme medal benefit from a possible PET victory in court. Or former Sen. Loren Legarda, 1998's campaigner, assuming her own case against the Cocoy's prospers. So the question is, why the substitution at least?

• • •

There are several ways to look at this new petition. One is that with Bunye in the hotseat, it will ensure that the control case, which will cost P50 million, will be kept alive for broadcast and publicity interest sufficient enough to make it the matter. Then it's a smart decision. But another way of looking at it is that the Supreme Court will be placed in a sort of dilemma, especially if it decides to stop the Bunye action points, as it very likely will, if a similar case in the past is invoked.

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cavanaugh

• • •

I caught President Macapagal-Arroyo's election lawyer, Romulo Macalintal, recalling a similar case that was thrown out by the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal (HRET). In 1995, the very durable Bayan Bunle Pag-Kaisa Adan was proclaimed winner over Congressman Rolando Macilla for one of the province's two congressional seats, but Macilla filed a protest with the HRET after he had completed his counting of ballots. However, before the protest could be heard by an electoral tribunal, Macilla's widow found herself in serious financial straits for her husband. The HRET threw out her petition, requiring that because of the cultural's death, his protest was also dead. Later, Macilla's widow, Mrs. Lourdes Macilla, was appointed to the Supreme Court (SC) by PGMA.

• • •

History now reads the decision of the Macilla's widow to accept the SC post was the actual undoing of Macapagal-Arroyo's presidency. There's speculation that he resigned because of his disappointment over the fact that he wasn't appointed prosecuting justice (to replace Merito Chico-Nazario, who was appointed to the Supreme Court two months ago).

• • •

Other speculate that Macilla resigned because of his displeasure over the petition that Macapagal-Arroyo's election lawyer, Romulo Macalintal, is now pursuing in the Supreme Court. Officials, who's being tried for plunder in the special division, I caught Chief Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio lamenting Sandoval's resignation.

• • •

He said the prosecution could work with the prosecution so many assistants, such as its objection to Bunye's foreign trip and the issue of house arrest.

• • •

Such a way will be that the Supreme Court could turn down Sandoval's resignation and he would be forced to stay.

• • •

Deputy Speaker Raul del Mar has now opined that the failure of the Senate to pass the only-cal revenue measures, except the excise tax bill, is another evidence of the need to have only one congressional chamber. He was disturbed by the fact that the House had passed the necessary bills when the regular session adjourned for Christmas—the tax treaty bill, laterals bills, on transfer pricing, and a measure that would extend the life of the franchise of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation for another 25 years. In the same period, the Senate managed to pass the six labor bill only, and in the special session, it was able to pass the general amnesty bill, but there was a chamber in the House in which the House version is the bicameral conference committee, which the House members were waiting for.

• • •

It is indeed very reassuring to think of the Judges as very busy and hardworking chamber, with a lot of members devoid of any sense of urgency and believe that the bill is a fundamental anti-national form of government. Given the state of our economy, the country's economic managers and legislature would doubtless be more responsive. But former President Ferdinand Marcos, refusing to sign emergency before Christmas, defended his decision, like a good doctor. He argued that an emergency declaration would be unnecessary and excessive bills passed by the House express trust in the good sound basis, but ultimately would provide only in saving revenues.

Shadowing, like Del Mar, is the evil of allowing more tax evasive regimes than vehicles for these years in order to help the government raise needed revenues. This ought to be made against for many signed. For many years citizens would wave to the IRS in any way to help collect more deficit. In fact, this creative income could be attributed to include other modes of advance payment.

• • •

AND THE MANY problems that are victims of the floods and flood hoist Asian tsunami regards you. Even if you refuse to donate, homelessness is the cause, the "value of giving" continues to banish them. If the tsunami devastated part of the world already reeling from hardship, the flood of relief and aid, already in the billions of dollars, can only address the most immediate needs of the survivors. Long-term issues, like hunger and poverty will continue to blight their lives. Long-standing concerns, such as reproductive health and violence against women, on the other hand, not only still continue to exist, but have even become more acute.

How these women could give birth safely, and how they are expected to care for their newborns amid the devastation, is a question God seems to have escaped the attention of much of the world. Even before the tsunami struck, according to the UNFPA, 15 percent of births will be attended to complications. The percentage of women dying from childbirth, or of infants dying soon after birth, can be expected to rise in these countries because the infrastructure—the health clinics, midwives and trained nurses—have been largely destroyed, and trained nurses have been exhausted.

To prevent unnecessary deaths, the UNFPA has begun distributing "safe birth kits" among pregnant women in the immediate outlook. The kits contain such basic items as soap, a razor blade, a little if taken to ensure the survival of both mother and child at delivery; a sterile plastic sheet, a length of soap, a razor blade to cut the umbilical cord, and a string to tie off the cord. A simple step to ensure a clean and safe birth. Some of the kits have been sent to Aceh, in Indonesia, swapped in a clean, blue or yellow sheet.

Whether both mother and child survive the other challenges of their post-Omnium existence, though, is another question altogether.

Getting a 'good pap'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

HERE'S what Dr. "V Bush" says about "getting a good Pap": "An optimal Pap test depends on several different elements: a good sample, proper interpretation of that sample, a good screening lab, and an accurate reading. Each aspect of any the way holds opportunities for error."

While there is little to no escape routine can do to ensure the quality of the lab work and interpretation of her sample, there are some things she can do to ensure that her doctor is doing such a good sample. Here are the "Vbush"-recommended doctors:

• Don't use any vaginal medication or douche for the 24 hours before the sample is taken.

• Don't have sex, use contraceptive suppositories or cream for 24 hours before your Pap.

• Don't schedule a Pap when your period is due. Small amounts of blood will not interfere with examination of the cells, but large amounts of blood can make it likely to make the cancer impossible to interpret.

• Don't wait until after your Pap is finished to ask medical questions or tell your clinician about if her if symptoms you're having. (An example: blood, pain during sexual intercourse.) Tell about your problems that may be key from doctor whether to go ahead with the Pap.

Dr. Elizabeth Stewart, primary author of the "V Book," says women shouldn't try to "convince" their doctors to perform a Pap test if they don't need it. Other test appointments of the vagina and vulva are some of the functions carried out in the pap test, it says.

• • •

HERE'S more on the ongoing "Survivor" trial on a vaccine to protect young women from the two types of HPV (human papilloma virus) that have been linked to 70 percent of all cervical cancer cases.

Dr. Noel del Rosario Bautista, one of the oncologists in the trial based at the Jose Pabilo Gallegos Medical Center (her husband John, also an Ob-Gyn, is a co-investigator), says that males from the present centers where vaccinations may sign up (aside from San Pablo, those are Makati Medical Center, Dr. Le Gallo Cancer Institute, Medical Center in Cavite and Calamba Medical Center), new centers will soon be set up. Those are at UP-PGH, University of Perpetual Help and Healthcare in Las Pinas.

To register, women volunteers must be between 15 to 55 years old, in good health and not pregnant or breastfeeding (and not planning to get pregnant within the next eight months). Dr. Bautista also stresses that the vaccines, Pap smears and gynecologic exams are all free of charge, though volunteers need to commit to 10 scheduled visits over the four years of the research trial. "The specimens for Pap smears are sent to the US since we have a centralized review board over there," she said.

In contrast to the complaint of investigators based at Makati Med that volunteers have been difficult to interact, Dra. says the response of women from San Pablo, closer to provincial areas, has been "overwhelming."

"Women in a rural setting do not give as much priority to their reproductive health care. The policy of the vaccines I say have never had a Pap smear or even have no idea of what it is. They do not even know what to tell when the cervix is!"

And right there is the reason cervical cancer, *despite its manageable nature*, continues to kill so many Filipino women.

By the way, National Cancer Consciousness Week will be observed from Jan. 16-21. On Jan. 16, Sunday, a fun run and walk for cancer will be observed with a Mass and get-together at 7:30 a.m. at the Our Lady of Remedios Medical Church in Project 4. Cancer survivors, their families, caregivers, friends and supporters are all invited to join them in this celebration of life.

Medicinal springs

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Ramón J. Farolan

(Ilocos Alley) Agoo de Hagonoy.

Some were found to contain sodium chloride, others to be bicarbonate, sulfur-bearing and alkaline springs. And there were only in Luzon and what the group, with its limited facilities, could visit. Actually the number of mineral springs in this country is not surprising given that we have a volcanic origin.

There was the spring at Lilo, Sor, Camarines Sur with an abundant water. The spring was on the side of Isarog and was in the jurisdiction of the town of Goa, between the barrios of Parmon and Lalo. As advertised, it was filled water was believed to be good for curing all sorts of ailments from anemia to respiratory ailments.

At Sinipsipan, Buhi on the shore of Buhay Asin, a second well of similar size. Between these two the church of Mauraro and situated in the middle of a subvalcanic dam that extended from the road up to the shores of the same name. A small promontory on the side of the dam was the junction of the bright and Zumarro to the north, and because of its salubrious effects on the people, it was known as Bunga dam. The place where the small hill over water made up of diluted deposits containing only part of the chemicals found in the water. Nevertheless, the location of the confluence was unexplored and pink.

From the limestone hill spelled the spring (Del Rio) a huge stone elliptic shaped pond, covered, level to some areas, produced by the solubilization of the limestone and the water from the volcanic mountain. The water were clear, transparent, odorless and tasted salty.

In the western coast of the peninsula of Zambales, approximately three kilometers from Bagombong, at the village of Pto. Filipinas, area there was a spring of Lalo Del Carmel and some 50 meters from the shore. The beach in the small cove was sandy and partly covered some white banks of volcanic ash, similar to that which constituted the floor of Los Baños at Agbas barrio. Around the spring, on the land, the mineral reaches 149 to 34 °C) spring itself were pools and with distinct temperatures. They contained among other substances carbonic acid, sulfur, silicates and magnesium.

From the beach of Masinloc in Pang, on the right mouth of the San Marco River, in the area of the building where the machinery that provided the water for Manila mood, were two principal springs, one was located to the northeast of the building and the other southeast. The grounds of the area were covered with a thick layer of sulfur. It appeared that the volcanic rock that not only revealed a great part of the province of Manila but extended to Bulacan, could bring the salted of these fertile plains.

The springs yielded from cold volcanic vein, gushing out of the ground at the foot of Mount Pinatubo, Tarlac. The waters were clear, transparent and odorless, with a slight sulfuric smell and in almost imperceptible alkaline taste.

We have a tendency to blame everyone but ourselves for the ills that befall us, but the fact of the resources are there to appreciate, what we blame most, what we should need, and what are easy to demolishing. The destruction on Aurora wasn't caused by a volcano of nature but man's greed. Is nature unreasonable?

[Memorial descriptivo de los manantiales minerales medicinales de la isla de Luzon," 1890-D. Jose Centeno, E. Aracil de Gil Romero, R. Jose de Hernandez D. Joaquin Avellaneda (date)]

Comments to farolanfarolan@yahoo.com

On the back of spirits

YOUNG BLOOD

Agent Victor S. Hammurabi

When I was a child, Shabbos went to see her characters of one of my favorite shows, a fantastic tale about Pat, the star of the middle classes and exotic monsters and of Bedouins whose people have thrown the dinner on the banks of spices and good it completed over me.

When I was living in India, Muslims were the people gathering to pray in the mosque near our apartment building, there

[illegible] nearly [illegible] outside the door. And I sure as hell was not going to march a pack into their mysterious building.

When I went to a Catholic high school, Muslims were the people who [illegible] Muslims were Catholics. Muslims were more who were thin and dressed to walk and blend [illegible]. And who seldom that they considered Jesus a prophet.

It took me a while to understand [illegible] of all things, I learned that Muslims knew about Adam and Eve and that they too revered Abraham.

While I was reading about India, the basis of half of my knowledge, I learned that Muslims had united the land under a single empire for a time. And that the Koran is one of the most important texts in the entire canon of the Taj Mahal, the masterpiece of the artist.

And while I was learning about the Philippines, the history of my home's other half, I learned about the brave resistance of the South, the Moros, who never fully conquered by the Spaniards were the Americans.

It is very different today. But not long ago, I read an editorial in another state peddling bigoted opinion encouraging us in fact to condemn the construction of a Muslim prayer room in a mall, claiming it would become a breeding ground for terrorists. No one would have raised an eyebrow if it were a Christian prayer room in a mall. Or a Jewish one.

I notice that people react to me irrevocably when I found the ART after beginning to shave. Because I am bald-faced and somewhat bearded, I probably look like an actor or thief. And apparently to them, Arab equals terrorist.

I wasn't always this way. I was a child of Christmas because a super superpower few decades I knows best, and then how to the world about why it has incited another country. I see more films and over reading in about how. Islam of the 3,000 people of so who died on Sept. 11, 2001, would see those things as lies. It appears of the violence being committed in their name.

I wanted, as a few decades and even more Arabs is and powerful religion for their own purposes. I which to the world know in love, when the influence of Islam's adherents are really peaceful people and good people, who have nothing to do with these fanatical clerics and terrorists and who are one religion to and subscribe into and it leads.

I wanted to be able to tell my Christian classmates in religion

Wrong pardon

mt., of the deputizing Sinthubat Pets in Rayon (Kamikhazee) Mornico's Collective, in solidarity with the women's and children's rights advocates, remind Pres. dent Macapagal-Arroyo that granting executive clemency to convicted child-rapist Romeo Jalosjos would be a travesty of justice. The mere fact that Jalosjos enjoys extra-special privileges while in prison is already insulting. The idea of granting him executive clemency is even greater insult and affront to our sense of morality and justice, especially as it is announced at the highest office of the land, and by a woman. President at that.

It is obvious that the call for the release of Jalosjos, a known child-abuser is fueled primarily by political considerations rather than by humanitarian reasons. Let the victim and those who support her campaign without a doubt push the boundaries of the limits of democracy in our sense of morality and justice, especially as it is announced at the highest office of the land, and by a woman. President at that.

Jalosjos was convicted while he was in power. It was a significant victory for children, and women, victims of violence. If not for the organized activism of concerned women and citizens, the victim could not have triumphed against power and influence.

The punishment meted out to Jalosjos is not even enough to erase the trauma suffered by the victim. Such crime will never be erased from the memory of the child. Releasing Jalosjos is tantamount to enthroning the pain and wound she suffered as a very young child-victim-rape.

There are many prisoners who are unjustly detained and suffering. Bring poor and without-the means to win the expensive services of a legal counsel, and lacking connection to the powers-that-be, they cannot partake the clemency. There are political prisoners who have been unjustly convicted for a crime they did not

and abuse. Keep Jalosjos in prison.

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—RONALD P. DOLALAS,
pastoral secretary,
Kapulungan Ibinlahan Para sa Tunay Kaunlaran,
kaisahan@sanlaya.com

Are mining safeguards enough?

IT is good that the revitalization in Larry Gadi has compelled him to search for a more "responsible" way of mining. (PDI, 1/4/15)

Unfortunately, the difficult for other Filipinos to easily buy into the claim that mining companies will be "better and responsible" extractors of natural resources due into account. Experience shows that open mining operations have not been consistent in implementing the supposed environmental and social safeguards.

The Mamayan disaster and the disappearance of numerous communities in Mindanao and Northern Luzon serve to the inability of this extractive industry to deliver its "development promises," both at the national and local levels.

In fact, most mining areas have become poorer because profits from mining operations have remained in the hands of the Manila based office, or worse, experienced to the further off-shore transnational corporations.

Despite the surprising Supreme Court decision favoring the mining industry, it is still difficult to trust that the new mining companies will act differently this time by employing newer technologies and by promising to be more forthright to the Environmental Impact Assessment governance in their operations.

—ANTERO CARAGUERA,
program coordinator,
Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PHILDHRRA),
69 C. Salvador St., Loyola Heights, Quezon City

LETTERS

God is not vengeful

MEDIAMIC Ted's "Rain of God" (PDI, 1/7/15) hits the nail right on the head.

All too often, people attribute to God's wrath events that are beyond human understanding. To say they are "rain of God" is to paint a picture of a God here on earth to avenge for the various infractions, big and small, that are committed by the (the) community. My belief in God goes against this concept.

The AIDS epidemic is said to be the Almighty's punishment to homosexuals. Never mind the fact that a lot, if not the majority, of those killed by the disease are women and children.

The moment one God's way of telling us to change our ways. By killing so many innocent children, and creating such havoc and disorder in the other species does not make God look like a loving God.

Filipino readily agrees things are being "Regulated by Joyce."Reality?

An anonymous God subjecting us to trials and tribulations to see how strong our faith is is, simply put? I can't believe it.

The Catholic president's claim that the typhoons are God's way of punishing politicians for supporting family planning, is ludicrous and only another display of people with axes to grind for themselves instead of just listening to their so-called God of love, don't? Learn to accept the blessing of God and enjoy a one-on-one, real, personal and truly fulfilling relationship with God in spite of all the things that are happening in the world.

—C. FERRANDO,
mosaicks@hotmail.com

Rationalizing reforestation

I DON'T completely agree with the former chief of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology who said that indiscriminate and illegal logging activities did not contribute to the occurrence of the killer landslides that struck Quezon and Quezon. (PDI, 1/5/15/06)

Scientific gravity leaves the evidence of the loss of water levels the hillsides. To say that massive logging has no effect on the capacity of the forests to reduce the impact of heavy rains on the soil and does not contribute to the much more rapid flow of water that causes massive erosion and landslides is definitely incorrect.

From what I have seen on TV and in the newspapers, the government's efforts to reforest the areas in various provinces could be attributed to nothing else but the dubious business logging that has undoubtedly contributed greatly to the loss of lives, infrastructure, property and crops.

I also find it hard to believe/claim the officials and personnel of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources are not aware of the existence of illegal logging in those provinces. Their claim that they have no knowledge of the existence of illegal logging and enforcement assembly in these areas can only mean that they don't take their one to monitor what's going on in the field or they have been bribed to keep silent.

I understand that the DENR does not have enough forest guards. But even with only a handful of them, massive logging and unlicensed chainsaw can not be operated. Every log that comes from the forest or mountainous roads end up in a processing plant or at a loading point for shipping. Search these places and you'll be able to catch a lot of culprits.

Perhaps, it is time to seriously study the possibility of the government doing all logging activities, like in India. Then, deforestation can be more easily controlled, private companies can do the visual processing, by withdrawing permits involved in forest harvesting. They would have as key logs for their mills from the government.

On reforestation, one of the major causes of its failure is poor implementation. In most cases, trees are marked for planting are not adequately evaluated in terms of their climatic and soil characteristics, species are randomly selected without due consideration to their adaptability to the planting sites, seeds are collected from easily accessed trees though they are mostly of poor form, and little attention is placed on seedling quality, site preparation and planting.

We now have a software for species-site matching in the Philippines, a product of a five-year research project. Let's use this to improve the government's reforestation efforts and save the forests before we go into planting.

—COLIN B. LANCIAN,
chlan@laguna.net

But can DENR stand up to multinational companies?

SET Vitug obviously missed the main point of my article, "More acquisitive in the making" (PDI, 12/12/14) as can be gleaned from his letter titled "Missing DENR's ability to serve." (PDI, 12/15/14)

I was saying that the Philippine government and, indeed, every Filipino government, in general, are simply not strong enough to stand up to the power of multinational companies when it comes to protecting the environment. To prove this point, I cited the case of Marcopper and Placer Dome in Marinduque, those in Indonesia and India, and the inability of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to control even local illegal loggers.

Vitug explains citing the provisions in the Mining Act, which he said are meant to safeguard the environment and the rights of indigenous peoples. But he offers no evidence to indicate that the DENR can or do enforce these provisions against the power of international firms or in the what-not cases against a mayor or governor.

It would have been more interesting if the letter had specified what has been accomplished in forcing Placer Dome to clean up the mess it left in Boac and Mogpog, Marinduque, how much compensation the Rodarello of Calatrava Bay for the loss of their livelihood and how the criminal case against the Placer Dome executive who met Marcopper has been resolved.

—JOHN J. CORRELL, J.J.,
senior research associate,
institute on Church and Social Issues, Ateneo de Manila University Campus,
Loyola Heights, Quezon City

The Buzz

Dear Readers, best as your comments, suggestions and views are today's most valuable as they are delivered. Tell us about the news you are interested in and the things you want improved. In your Tuesday newspaper, Neil BOZENTA visits that key sector, today's newspaper and post to (BZ—Dear) or (Neil Bozenta). The section keywords are indicated in the beginning of each section.

The recent earthquake and tsunami that resulted in over 15k, 000 deaths and injuries to countless others make me feel that life is. . .

Precious & short. I have no control of future but I can do something today. Hug! See life fully, live accordingly & take care of all environment.
—Ulric Bolting, Quezon City

. . fragile and temporary
—Cesar Marbebe, M. Reyes, Agusan del Norte

just how it can be gone in seconds at unexpected times & in unanticipated. & in an instant. Appreciate every day & live it fullest!.
—M. Jessie Alonso, Angeles City

if recent earthquake & tsunami made me feel helpless. motivated me to invest / turn to God. but also grateful that still I survived.
—Ashdel paz sang, Baguio

Life's a blessing. People did escaped it tragedy are lucky & must be thankful to God. Life's so fanatic some caught! Not fearful by sharing what they can.
—Jeffrey Lim, D.C.

God-given and taken.
—Marissa Pestaño, Antipolo, Rizal

Life is too short. the government must modernize our weather forecasting system & train on prepare

Filipinos from Mindanao, Visayas, etc.
—IAN LAUEL, Cebu

very unpredictable and prepared-ness is a must. Prayers will greatly help too.
—peter abit, quezon city

Life is. . . co-existent with the environment.
—Jeremy Indjay, Baguio

worthless when nature is not at peace with humans.
—salvador p. pagaran, quezon city

Life is best under the hands of God.
—engineer arvin fajardo, dipolog city

full of surprises but we never know what will happen next. . .
—elsa c. sarda, quezon city

. . . That LIFE is so fragile, in just a blink of an eye we can no longer see the world. . .
—GINA M. BENITEZ, San Jacinto City

LIFE is so short that we need to take care of it and also of NATURE.
—Ralph Solomon B. Emeliano, Bataan city

Life is unpredictable.
—Emmanuel Lo, D

only borrowed from GOD.
—Mirajo Lopez, Bohol, Antipolo

. . . life is like a dream so enjoy it during it, & smile unexpectedly. We must say it's a God's glory!
—Antonio Espinosa, Antipolo City

Beyond I end.
—Amado p., makati

not something that one-using tools. It's only entrusted if so by God and this can take it anytime he wants to. Life is a gift from God. we must live it rightfully so that those still has no regrets in heaven & not taken it away from us.
—John Bongato, Antipolo City

life is very important. we read the book of PSALM (ABOU-3 (ERV) line 1,365 with gladness.

—Jennifer I. Amador, Baguio

life is the reason that it is so important. & the memory of it sometimes fades however, that life is a short. I live an happy-go-nature & most of it.
—Carlos Ilumin, manila

Must be.
—JOSE BROMALEY jr, Iriga city

not. I believe I take it easy, only "GOD" has it KNOW so am live it.
—Leny Bit, Antipolo

Life is uncertain, inevitable. Many happen which are beyond our control. We ought to be prepared always.
—pastorgondran, manila

Make me feel did life as earth it seems.
—Mercedes Tajonera, Mandaluyong city

an unpredictable journey. A city that might be about or long. We must be prepared to know it's ending.
—marvelo anthony mallari, caloocan city

Good to make us realize that we all are life human enough to feel joy, gladness, love, pain, sorrow, compassion and LOVE.
—marilou m. Santos, ()

bound to end, anytime, anywhere.
—Divina Lopez, Davao city

survival of the fittest I may all of resonant sentiment may allow the gifts of thousands of various theories.
—cynthia g. enriquez, manila

precious
—Candy Sandia, Tanauan city

is not sure we just borrow it. Think a time we'll go. We must a friend more strong of water.
—Angel Garcia, cebu

is not what it seemed, such we content of it it is still be taken not of you oft-guard, for death is like a thief in the night.
—ma p. miraflor, quezon city

. . . that life is endless, scary, so life at all.
—dan balbino, cebu

Life is sparkle in his card. Be. cherish our GOD, & enjoy me to her. I get it. . according, I to with us.
—Percival Guerrero, davao, Kidapawan City

. . . and daily can it we cannot in ways to be control of situations we have no answers in.
—CJ Libag-cuenca, makati City

Sometimes full of tragedies beyond comprehension, sufferings, beyond explanation to words, and human emotion beyond expectations.
—Kathleen Lim, Davao City

. . . that life is too short, we need to live life to the fullest and always prepared that anytime we may die.
—renie natil, caloocan city

A journey not a destination. So, we have to live our lives wisely.
—EDGAR S. FLORES, olongapo city

Life is too short to keep and we

should live that life we have now with principle, dignity and morality.
—Ken Bancol, Bislumala City

It makes me feel that I life is like a MIRACLE.
—el ethel, quezon city

is not always. It can be snapped out of you any moment so make the most out of it.
—Frederick sanchez, Infant, Baguio

God Life is short & so must be enjoyed / it fullest, & once off it fears, doubts, angst, & make LIFE as if cannot of life & not guidance.
—michelle agang, davao city

ephemeral
—gerry dagsan, agao city

. . . that life is. . . too fragile. Only we are only given enough time to find and follow our purpose.
—jerson bailig, quezon city

. . . as temporary so God wills it to be.
—Jon R. Lopeda, D.C.

life is a journey not a destination. So the your lives wisely
—EDGAR L. FLORES, olongapo city

Fleeting. In every second counts.
—Pilar Villaria, Ifugao

full of change. many say the climate was GOOD, act. for me no. it's some people's act of neglect & towards nature, GOD is good.
—ernie . manila

It makes me feel like life has nothing much of a value. Yes, full life & actions of fallacies, then you closed at the EXIT OF MOTHER.
—Emilio Linao, Baguio

temporary. Good life's heaven.
—Fatos, bamboo pe

Life is rare I doubt no one must at easy prepare by living obedient I LIVE.
—Ryan L. Rotaje, cebu city

Life is short & would like, make it last. & it's that pleasure kind, help less fortunate people. I have a better life.

—ralph lartiz dino m., cebu city

so terrible that the catastrophe spared no one since it be innocent and the sinful were held affected.
—el Mendoza, caloocan

. . . at the mercy of nature.
—Kelly Jade Ortega, Bonifacio City

a series of unorthodox events. . . no one knows what tomorrow has in store for us.
—mark esteban, quezon city, kalookan

human life is cause by the "LIVING TIME" life is cardinal! You always have to be ready as at any time. It take no necessary present form / you don't exist until your Passing.
—Edwin R. Trinidad, Davao

the recent tsunami makes me feel was life is just short. So do everything you can today, cos maybe she's no more Tomorrow. ()
—michael joshua Salado, cebu city

precious and a gift from God that can be taken anytime it's wanted.
—jobelo pareja, quezon city

. . . life is extremely brief. It made me wanting to live it to the fullest in a way a little while & that my life is flowing away.
—Cotaptn Flores, Davao City

it just brief and anytime he can take it as he wishes so.
and so we must be good stewards!
—Ma. ELENA ERANDIO, paranaque

. . . worthless when nature is not at peace with humans.
—salvador p. pagaran, quezon city

Life is very, very precious. that can be taken away from you in a most unexpected time, so always be prepared. for the unpolluted things you've been wanting to do.
—Jose Ric Aguilos, Antipolo City

Life is too short, enjoy your life & life gone forever. So give your best shot in everything you do, everyday of your life.
—pell Ebarle, las baños

Across the NATION

A BAGUIO doctor shows the injection site of vaccine against meningococcemia. PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. ANTHONY LLOYD CASTILLO

Baguio tourism in peril over reports on meningo

BAGUIO CITY—A deadly bacteria that may have killed up to 28 people in recent months has set this picturesque northern resort city on edge, threatening the region's vital tourism industry.

An outbreak of meningococcemia, a disease that targets the central nervous system, has spooked guests and special events organizers and local governments, ordered by the World Health Organization (WHO), struggle to control the sickness.

The national government, with WHO assistance, has set up a special "command post" here with a laboratory to speed up detection and monitoring of the disease, health officials said.

Mayor Bernabe Tamayo has tapped a special fund, normally reserved for disaster relief, to buy medicines, laboratory equipment and other supplies to fight the disease.

For this city of 300,000 people located some 200 km north of Manila, the cluster of cases is more than just a public health concern.

Newspaper reports of the outbreak have fazed Baguio's tourism-promoted economy, industry leaders say.

"It really caused as much decline in our business to the tourism industry in Baguio," said anthony de Leon, president of the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Baguio, citing sharp losses in two of the biggest events since the start of the year.

Baguio's public order and safety chief Emmanuel Reyes expressed concern that the annual "Flower Festival," a major Baguio celebration scheduled for February every summer, normally brings in thousands of visitors, might be affected.

The health department has tried to reassure the public, saying the meningococcus disease is not airborne and is spread by people sneezing or coughing or by the sharing of food, drinks and utensils.

It has an incubation period of three to four days and symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, muscle like aches, and eventually skin lesions.

But it can be prevented with simple precautions like maintaining clean surroundings, washing hands frequently, avoiding crowds and not sharing utensils with those infected.

Unfortunately, it can be treated with penicillin and other drugs, experts say.

The officials said there were medicines to prevent and cure it and even vaccines, although such vaccines were too expensive to be distributed to the public.

Health department records showed that, since 2003, 68 suspected cases of meningococcemia have been detected in the country, nine less per week than 90 percent of the cases in Baguio.

Twenty-eight deaths in Baguio are believed to have been due to the disease since March last year.

However, due to the difficulty of testing for the disease, "only five actual cases have been confirmed with only three deaths," Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said. AFP

Firms give vaccines to scores of workers

BAGUIO CITY—Private companies here stepped forward with their own anti-meningococcemia projects bent to guarantee that productivity in not slowed down by the local meningitis scare.

Think Information Hub, Inc. enclosure to 2,000 employees but week, using medical tests it imported to avoid disturbing "what is left of local supplies," said Evalyn Gacad, Tipi spokesperson.

Dr. Jeremias Bautista, leader of a local medical team monitoring meningococcemia, told reporters last week that antibiotic and vaccine supplies have dwindled due to the increased demand from the private sector.

Mothers Mary, Tipi president, also sent Mayor Bernabe Tamayo 1,000 vaccine vials to supplement the Baguio supply.

The city government is subsidizing the antibiotic drugs it distributes for free to market vendors and has many residents who are vulnerable to infection.

But Tamayo, in a press statement, said the government would not shoulder current private expenses which range from P1,500 to P2,500 per injection shot.

Bautista said more expensive shots involved vaccines that could shield persons against a much wider variety of meningococcemia strains.

Several banks have also set up vaccines to their Baguio branches.

A bank official said their corporate benefits cover such emergencies as meningococcemia infection. Everyone was then up on the bank's offer, he said.

Rising vaccines demand by Saudi Arabia, the Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA) has scheduled a new round of vaccinations to the Churches in Baguio's 5,000 Muslims. Shiqabdullah and Tausug migrants, who came to visit their dead first by the health department as potentially infected area.

Baguio universities have planned buying their own stock "as the need arises," but a teacher said none of the teaching staffers and classes are threatened yet.

Public schoolteachers have been required to wear surgical masks during classes in several grade schools as a precaution.

In the tourist town of Baguio in Ifi Province, health officials reported the death of two babies. An 8-year-old child from Baguio was also admitted at the Buena Grande Hospital.

In Tagaytay City, vegetable producers there have been canvassing on the bad press Baguio vegetables are receiving.

Vegetable traders there avoid the La Trinidad vegetable trading center because of reports of severe meningococcemia victims last year. *Reports from Philippine Collegian, Gerlach Macla, Jeannelene Catalan, PIA Northern Luzon Bureau*

Sayyaf men abduct, execute 3 salesmen from Pampanga

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Three salesmen from Pampanga were killed by suspected Abu Sayyaf terrorists in Jolo, Sulu on Saturday (Jan. 8), the Southern Command reported.

Southern Mindanao Command spokesman Lt. Colonel Antonio Bragances said another salesman survived the killing.

"What we gathered was that they were selling kerosene to the Muslim villages in Jolo when suddenly several armed men abducted them and brought them to an island where they were executed," Bragances told the Inquirer.

Southern Mindanao Command chief Lt. General Alexander Yano, Jolo-based commander Brig. Gen. Ernesto Gonzales and other officials could not be reached for comment.

Bragances said the victims were identified as Rolando Lacsamana, 34, of San Juan, Macabebe, Pampanga.

The suspects, Moamen said, left them, thinking that they were already dead. *John Aquino, PIA Mindanao Bureau*

Diplomats back plans for Hundred Islands

TWO foreign diplomats expressed support for plans proposed by the Alaminos City government to tap the tourism and investment potentials of the Hundred Islands.

Christian Taugis, Belgian ambassador to Manila, and Robert Keller, chief of affairs of the United Kingdom, said in an interview with radio station dzRH that they were very impressed with the beauty of the Hundred Islands.

The two were among several other foreign diplomats, including US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone, who visited the islands upon invitation by Alaminos Mayor Hernani Braganza and former President Fidel Ramos.

The diplomats also attended the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Lingayen Gulf landing of US Gen. Douglas MacArthur on Sunday.

"I have visited several places, [but] the Hundred Islands is just amazing," Taugis said.

"I only saw the Hundred Islands in photos. I am very impressed. It's gallons more information about the place and get in touch with the owners or mayor," said Keller.

"I think the Hundred Islands' potential and the mayor will succeed with their administration plan to redevelop the islands. I can see their enthusiasm and devotion," he said.

The diplomats also explored opportunities to invest in the commercial zoning of giant clams.

They earlier visited Barangay San Vicente and took part in the ceremonial planting of Inglatubo crops and an inspection of the Bolo Festival, Dominggo Sereno and Bernie Banggoy left on Jan. 10 said.

The suspects, Moamen said, left them, thinking that they were already dead. *John Aquino, PIA Mindanao Bureau*

FORMER President Fidel Ramos swims in the waters of the Lingayen Gulf in an act intended to promote tourism and development planned by the Alaminos City government, which he explores. Mayor Braganza, beside. INQ

Mr. Ramos said the Hundred Islands is a perfect investment but-and-tourist destination.

"A bit weather persists all the islands all throughout the year, Dili yun," the former president said the ambassadors and other dignitaries.

Gov. Victor Agbayani said the celebrations of the Lingayen Gulf landings would honor not only the thousands of Filipino and American soldiers who fought for the country's independence from Japanese occupation, but also commemorate the ideals and deeds of Filipino soldiers, guerrillas and civilian who sacrificed their lives during the war.

The historic Lingayen Gulf landing on Jan. 9, 1945, began the campaign of the Allied forces for the liberation of Manila and the rest of Luzon from Japanese forces.

Agbayani led provincial and municipal officials to welcome the war veterans, including Mr. Ramos and diplomats from the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Belgium, Israel and other countries.

The marine commando was followed by the opening of a photo exhibit to relive the history of the soldiers and their efforts, fellowship with our veterans and distribution of commemorative badges and pins.

Yolanda Sotelo-Fuerbe, PIA Northern Luzon Bureau

Center named for Columban priest built to seek peace

By Carla P. Gomez
PIA Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—The spirit of Fr. Niall O'Brien continues to live through a peace center built in his name.

Gene Villanueva, director of the Niall O'Brien Peace Center, said the center was a "final test of an inspiration" brought about by the Columban missionary priest who worked in the Philippines for 40 years and died of a rare blood disease in April last year.

Being the founder of Sts. Church in the Philippines in 1992 who served as its national chaplain until his death, O'Brien was an inspiration in his pursuit for bringing back peace into the agenda of the local Church to the Philippines through his works for peace and justice, "he said.

The Christ is an International Church-based organization that works for promotion of peace.

Sr. Brian Gore, a Columban missionary who was killed with O'Brien's during ambush, has followed the center on Sept. 11 Lage Phase II in this city.

O'Brien and Gore were among the three priests and six lay Church workers who were arrested in the mid-1980s after they were falsely charged with the murder of Edmundson Mayor Pablo Sola and his bodyguards.

At that time, O'Brien was deeply involved in his work to empower his poor and was haggedly the military as a communist.

Negros Nine

The "Negros Nine" were detained for six months after eight months of hearsay arrest. The international attention forced the Marcos regime to drop the charges against the nine.

Villanueva said they, too, wanted to start a revolution "for its excellences through our work or the center that will serve as a point where people from all walks of life can gather and build a culture of peace in Negros and the country."

He said the center will continue the work of O'Brien in peace-time education for peace, advocacy work against torture, child labor, the death penalty and the illicit trade and prostitution of small arms and light weapons.

It will also focus its main goal on peace journalism and communications, and parenting for peace and justice that will train couples and young parents to child-rear their children in a non-violent home, help form future citizens who will be bearers of peace and reconciliation.

Villanueva said a core group of persons will be trained to be trainors of trainers to promote peace and justice so they can have a multiplier effect on others, especially in parishes and small Christian communities.

Negros gov seeks stop to flood of imported sugar

By Carla P. Gomez
PIA Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Marañon has called for immediate action to put a stop to the entry of imported sugar, saying unofficial reports from Warehouse (CPO) into the local market to protect the domestic sugar industry.

In a statement of concern on the plight of our sugar producers" based on Sunday the governor said all concerned officials should take immediate steps to review the present situation and "take needed measures to correct the apparent inequity."

He also urged sugar traders, millers and associations to do what can, necessary to protect sugar producers.

"In the event that these initiatives remain indifferent, the provincial government finds no alternative but to call upon the sugar producers to take whatever measures they may deem best to protect their individual interests and those of their workers," he said.

Marañon said that, at the start of the milling period, sugar producers were informed that a wider classification of sugar would be made as a way of inserting a leaning costs to be brought about by filling sugar prices allegedly caused by an oversupply of domestic sugar.

The matter classifying a substantial percentage of sugar produced as sources and export sugar, lowering the overall composite price and the resulting reduction in the unit of production, he said.

Marañon said that records received by his office showed that, despite those steps, the entry of imported sugar was unrelated and there is a number of factors to generally flooding the limited warehouses in the country.

"The provincial government of Negros Occidental expresses its deep concern on this apparent conflict of policies and actions being made by government agencies concerned. For how can we deplore sugar supply to stabilized prices and lack of the same time allow imported sugar into the domestic market?" the governor asked.

Sugar Regulatory Administrator Jasper Ledesma, however, explained that imported sugar brought in through bonded warehouses are used for products exported out of the country and are not allowed to be sold in the domestic market.

"The imported sugar brought in through CPOs are not entering the domestic market," he said.

Ledesma also said based on records, sugar imported through CPOs dropped by 12,000 bags last year compared to 2003.

He also said mill gate prices of domestic sugar went up to the first week of January by P1 to P10 selling at P718 to P725 per 50-kg bag.

"This is a good sign, we are looking at a steady and continued improvement of prices from here on," he said. "We are encouraged by the behavior of the market over Christmas."

Bombs, guns in raid 'planted,' says group

Front page, A1

man Movement, an organization of Islamic converts with alleged links to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Jemaah Islamiyah regional terror network.

Ledesma claim disputed

Mendoza cordy dismissed Ledesma's claim.

"The evidence was not planted," the officer in charge of the Philippine National Police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group said the bounces in a text message.

Mendoza, in a press statement later, defended the raid, saying it was triggered by "verified information gathered by the CIDG that the Islamic Information Center was being used as a front by radical Islam groups and individuals.

'They're innocent'

"The CIDG assures the public, particularly our Muslim brothers and sisters, that we shall continue to dig deeper into this case if only to go after those who give Islam a bad name, and thereby safeguard public safety and national interest," Mendoza added.

Twelve of the 17 people detained by the police have been freed for lack of evidence while the five others have been charged with illegal possession of explosives and firearms.

Police allowed reporters to see the five—from a distance—at the PNP medical center in Camp Crame. Most of them were orange detainee shirts.

Ledesma was among some 50 Muslims who picketed Camp Crame, demanding the release of the five detainees—Rijanul Akmin, Muamar Adam, Leonardo Ricaldo, Jonrhea Amor and Allan Nagda.

"They're not supposed to be there; they're innocent" an angry Penny Dimaluan, national president of the Ambuan party-list group, shouted.

Islam's message of peace

Akmin, in particular, could not have been part of any terrorist plot, Ledesma said, adding that Akmin had gone to the Islamic center merely to volunteer his services as an instructor on Muslim and the Koran.

"He's a highly respected Muslim leader," Ledesma said. "He has long been propagating Islam's message of peace and harmony."

Relatives of those arrested said the accusations against their kin were unbelievable.

They said that Akmin, for instance, was among those who led a major antiwar rally in Manila City in 1994.

"How could anyone of those kinds of mass killing and on a big Christian site where they have how Muslims accept Christ, whose miraculous birth is narrated in a whole chapter of the Koran?" said Akmin's brother, Ibrahimad Bonotaan K. Akmin.

Media should check first

The Akmins are sons of the late Sen. Ahmad Domocao Alonto Sr., who authored measures in Congress calling for the "Filipinization" of the Moros and the minority tribes.

A group of Christian lawyers has volunteered to work for the release of Akmin, his relatives said.

In a statement issued in Marawi, the relatives of the Marinaan Muslim who were arrested said the "Great thing the media could do is to verify or reconstruct reports that tend to suggest that Islam or the Muslims themselves are anti-Christ, before they consider themselves as accurate and it is not good for the communities and people who have spent the best of their times living in legitimate businesses."

They said some of the arrested men were in mid-afternoon prayers when the raiders barged in. *With a report from Neil B. Macheda, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

PNP chief Gen. Arturo Lomibao presents to the media the five suspects behind an alleged bomb plot in Quiapo, Manila, are still detained in Camp Crame. They are (from left) Rijanul Akmin, Leonardo Ricaldo, Muamar Adam, Jonrhea Amor and Allan Nagda. PHOTOGRAPHER

Moro rebs overrun Army base

Front page, A1

ed guerrilla fatalities.

"It's difficult to say how many from the attackers were killed because most often survivors have to carry (away) their slain comrades," he added.

The military said it was using howitzers to shell rebel positions while helicopters fired rockets and machine guns to retake the army outpost.

Col. Buenaventura Pascual, AFP Public Information Office chief, said eight soldiers were killed and that the base of the 37th Infantry Brigade in Mamasapano was "90 percent secured" by 8MLF fighters.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu said field reports he had received put the body count at 11 rebels and six soldiers killed.

Rebels want vengeance

The violence broke out at around 12 p.m. Sunday night when military detachments in Linantangan, Mamasapano and Tukuran in Shariff Aguak—both in Maguindanao—were attacked by the MILF, according to the military.

It said the raid was in retaliation for the death of suspected Abu Sayfa leader Nader Binago in a clash with soldiers on Jan. 7 in Datu Piang, Mag Ando. It is a small kidnap-for-ransom group.

One of the commanders of Sunday night's attack was identified by the military as Abdul Wahid Imolok, said to be a relative of Binago.

"In the past, clashes were not categorized as institutional fights but were rooted in clan wars, or rido, that somehow ended up in armed hostilities," Pama said reporters at Camp Aguinaldo.

No-MILF sanction

"This was an action of an independent group and was not sanctioned by the hierarchy of the MILF," he added.

Pama said military officers in the joint ceasefire panel were asking their MILF counterparts to "take drastic action" against Nader's group.

Kabala said the MILF had not established what caused the fighting. "Unless an investigation is conducted," he said.

"We are now being subjected to (offensive firing) and mortar shelling and are request air strikes, any moment," he said on the phone.

Taken hostage!

Reuters quoted Army regional commander Maj. Gen. Raul Relloso as saying: "We have lost six soldiers. The rebels are still holding one soldier but we recovered two others."

"This is a clear violation of the ceasefire agreement," said Relloso. Reinforcements from the 604th Infantry Brigade have been sent to the battle site.

Citing reports from MILF field commanders, Kabala said that, aside from the rebels' ambush, the clash was "disturbances (firing), a faction of state Biden Binago.

Kabala said Abdulrahman Binago was a regular MILF member, while Biden Binago belonged to another group.

"We are trying to prevent the clashes from spreading," he told the reporters.

Air strikes

Two helicopter gunships conducted air strikes at about 2 a.m. to drive away the rebels and allow reinforcements to arrive by the beleaguered elements of the 37th IB.

Philippine and Malaysian officials said the battle would not derail the peace talks scheduled to resume a 23-year-old separatist rebellion that has killed at least 120,000 people and hurt foreign investments and rural development.

Peace talks between the two sides are due to resume on January 26 in Malaysia, government, which is brokering the talks, sets a date for their resumption. *With reports from Edwin G. Fernando and Charlie Saluta, PDI Mindanao Bureau; and Inquirer wires*

DNA samples of missing Filipinos sought

THE DEPARTMENT of Foreign Affairs yesterday called on relatives of the 18 Filipinos still missing in Thailand to provide DNA samples of their kin to help locate and identify their bodies.

The DFA said in a statement that the samples would be sent to the Philippine Embassy in Bangkok. The same step would be undertaken with the DNA of thousands of still unidentified bodies collected by Thai authorities.

Samples

DNA samples of the missing Filipinos could be obtained from items they had left behind such as a toothbrush or hairbrush. DNA samples of close relatives, preferably parents or siblings, may also be used, the DFA said.

Four Filipinos in Thailand were confirmed to have died while 18 others are still missing.

The DFA is urging relatives of the missing Filipinos to get in touch with Sheila Solan of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration at tel. nos. 834-4599 or 834-998 or with the 24-hour DFA Action Center at 834-3333, 834-4097, 832-4411 or 832-4874.

Tsunami onslaught

The national central bureau secretariat of Interpol Manila yesterday informed the DFA that the Norwegian police had listed Christine Bunoz, a Filipina national, as one of the foreign nationals who survived the tsunami onslaught.

Interpol gave no details about Bunoz except to say that she had been located and declared safe.

Reminder team

The Philippines has sent an eight-member forensics team to Thailand to help in identifying the numerous fatalities from the tsunami.

The Philippine contingent has volunteered to be the Quick Response Team of the 5000-strong 19-nation Disaster Victim Identification group.

The Philippine team will be given technical and equipment support by Kenyon Worldwide Disaster Management, a private group under contract with the Australian government. *Report by Evan Jerome Ambag and AFP*

Chopper crash, aftershocks rattle relief effort

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grounds amid fears of relief attacks

Indonesian military chief Sutarto Sutarto said The Associated Press that he had heard reports of rebels sneaking aid and cross briefly kidnapping Indonesian aid workers.

Rebels not responsible

Insurgents said the workers were rescued by Indonesian forces but gave no further details.

Indonesia's military on Sunday warned aid workers that rebels in Aceh were taking shelter in camps for workers, but the government dismissed those claims on Monday. The government also said rebels were not responsible for a shooting over the weekend that killed a soldier and injured three others.

Military Minister Abri Hitlah said a troubled Indonesian aid worker is responsible for bursts of gunfire. The soldier was in custody, Hitlah said.

Aftershocks

Aftershocks from the massive earthquake that spawned the killer waves continued to rattle residents in the Southeast Asian countries. A 6.2-magnitude tremor early Monday sent people scrambling from their homes in Banda Aceh, but no injuries or damage were reported.

The tsunami triggered by the devastating earthquake on Dec. 26 killed at least 136,000 people around the Indian Ocean, with Aceh province on the north tip of Sumatra island accounting for almost all of Indonesia's 104,000 deaths.

The giant waves also killed about 30,000 people in Sri Lanka, 15,000 in India, more than 5,000 in Thailand and others in the Maldives, Burma (Myanmar), Bangladesh and several east African nations.

Grim task

Indonesian authorities promised to speed up the grim task of recovering and burying the dead. Welfare Minister Alwi Shihab said 58,189 bodies had been buried in the shattered area on the northern tip of Sumatra island and some 50,000 more are "examined" around the region.

Some corpses are still trapped in collapsed buildings and rotting under debris in roads and streets. The tsunami's cold barge over some areas of the provincial capital.

A bit of good news

But 16 days on since the deadly tsunami struck, with hope all but gone of finding tens of thousands of missing people alive, came a rare bit of good news.

A 22-year-old Indonesian, Ari Afrizal, was rescued at sea somewhere late last week by the United Arab Emirates-registered Al Nakheel, said Sinhalese Peacemonitors, a spokesperson for the shipping harbor Penguin Malaysia.

Ari was swept out to sea when the tsunami hit his home in Aceh, Parimantyo said, adding that the ship crew had not provided other details.

It was the third case of an Indonesian rescued survivor brought to Malaysia.

Global response

The global response to the disaster has been unprecedented—governments and agencies have pledged more than $3 billion to aid and companies and individuals have promised $1.5 billion.

Rich countries say they will suspend debt repayments of tsunami-hit nations to help free resources for rebuilding.

The Paris Club of creditor nations is ready to agree a debt moratorium for affected countries, Indonesia said it wanted to freeze up to $5.2 billion in repayments until 2007.

UN Secretary of State Colin Powell, fresh from touring the stricken region, said Washington should plan to provide long-term aid in efforts that focus saving lives to rebuilding communities.

Much of the huge relief effort has been focused on getting food, water and shelter to victims in the worst hit areas of Indonesia.

World Food Program officials said the BBC that they were optimistic no tsunami survivors would lose their lives to hunger, and said should reach nearly all survivors within a week.

Tons of food, medicine, water and drinking water are being flown to Banda Aceh in a seemingly never-ending stream of aircraft along with doctors, nurses and relief workers.

Exhumation

Thailand, where hundreds of foreign tourists died, said it would have to exhume more than 600 hastily buried bodies for fuller forensic tests. More than 2,000 of the 5,300 known dead in the country have yet to be identified.

In Sri Lanka, children and teachers prepared for a massive cleanup as a new school term started. In many coastal areas, desks are broken, rooms are full of a sodden mess left by the killer waves and some schools are being used as refugee centers.

Overcome trauma

"Lessons can be taken from to clean up after a tsunami," joked parent U. Wickramasinghe, who volunteered to help get a school near the coastal city of Galle back into shape.

Social workers hope the resumption of studies will help children overcome the trauma of the catastrophe, which took many families and destroyed homes and businesses. *Reports from AP and Reuters*

Question of the Week

Did government act properly in handling the outbreak of meningococcemia in Baguio City?

Senders of a text ID (with publish) a Tuesday's **InqBox** *will each receive an 'Inquirer T-shirt'!*

Buy the Inquirer news kiosk/city message.

Text your answers to 2366 (inquirer) or 333 (inquirer)

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METRO

Your personal feedback (signal or text service) to 0917 (Globe) or 981 (Smart) Editor Ester G. Ogsimer Assistant Editor Doreen B. Hiller

Guard killed in LRT robbery; ₱0.7M lost

By Leila B. Salaverria

TWO ROBBERS in janitors' uniforms struck at the LRT Line 1 station on C.M. Recto Avenue early yesterday morning, killing a security guard and taking with them ₱700,000 in cash from the station's office.

All that remained of the robbers after they left forcibly were a trail of money bills at the station of the fare unit.

Police suspect an insider was involved in the incident.

The two not only were uniformed similar to those worn by janitors from the franchised janitorial agency who work at the LRT Line 1, but also turned off the light at the hallway where the security camera was located, indicating they knew where the light was.

Killed in the incident was security guard Arvelio Borja, 28, from the Lockheed Security Agency.

According to SPO1 William Gonzalez, Line Inspectors, a cashier in the station, had just finished counting fares that P worth of earnings at the station of Recto Avenue and Evangelista Street, Sta. Cruz, Manila, at around 2 a.m.

Borja was inside the cashier's office at the station's third floor, where he was standing as a relief man to the counting according to office procedure.

As Borja was about to leave the office after the counting was over, two armed men barged in and shot Borja, hitting him on the right side of the body.

One of the suspects told investors to lie face down on the floor. Then they took the cashier's bank behind his back with a belt. Investors could be did not recognize either of them.

The two suspects later put the money bills in canvas sacks, but left behind the coins. Investors said there was around ₱500,000 in the cashier's office, but only ₱700,000 was missing.

The suspects also took with them Borja's shotgun and handheld radio, after hitting Investors with a blunt object. The cashier was later able to free himself and immediately called for help.

Borja was rushed to the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center, where he was declared dead a few hours later.

The four janitors who were on duty at the LRT yesterday were also tackled for questioning at the NPD homicide office yesterday and would be subjected to a paraffin test. They denied involvement in the incident.

Condemnation said they would still find out how the suspects were able to get hold of the janitor uniforms.

PLAYTIME
Children frolic as a deep sear the Bauza Compound in Tondo, Manila. In the evening, the playground is a macabre novel into a sleeping quarters for scores of homeless families in the area.

Mayors say rag scheme all wet

THE AGENCY'S new "wet rag scheme" against barefooted pedestrians is not a violation of human rights, according to Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Bayani Fernando.

The chair was standing to rebuke those who say measures that violate "basic" rights would be transgressed if the scheme is approved.

"I don't see any human rights violation here," Fernando said during a press conference yesterday. "Driving in the middle of the road and blocking traffic flow is not a right."

Fernando said Manila-sized rags would be hung "like flags" on the agency's vehicles and any pedestrians who block the roads and cause traffic jams.

However, he clarified that the agency's enforcers would not pelt wet rags at violators as mentioned in other news reports (not to the knowledge).

MMDA Traffic Operations Center Executive Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said the agency would deploy trucks where the wet rags would be hung. He added that the trucks would warn the pedestrians first before using the rags on hardheaded persons who refuse to stay in designated areas.

But Makati and Pasay City officials said they would never MMDA personnel who would use the wet rags. Fernando-Jun Miguel, director of the city's Department of Public Safety warned that the MMDA risks facing the public's ire and a deluge of lawsuit for violating human rights.

Pasay Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad added the MMDA should coordinate with the local government before taking any course of action that would directly affect its constituents.

"What he is proposing is ridiculous and embarrassing," said Muntinlupa Mayor Bayani Fernando, adding that there are alternatives available to make people follow the rules, like the city's own ordinance on jaywalking similar to that of Caloocan's.

Caloocan City Mayor Recto Echiverri added that the plan was "like stupefied."

On the other hand, Valenzuela Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian said closing sidewalks as a preventive measure was a correct approach.

"We will not adopt that policy here," said Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, who had always maintained that the MMDA "cannot legislate." Rather should instead strictly implement city ordinances pertaining to traffic and public order, including local laws on jaywalking, vagrancy and road obstruction, he said. Rhegana C. Dilig, Nancy L. Carvajal, Ruth L. Navarro, Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Tonyo V. Quintanilla

Shabu lab caretaker gives up

THE ALLEGED caretaker of the shabu laboratory and warehouse seized by a suspected big-time drug peddler in Davao City surrendered to authorities on Friday with the help of his relatives.

Jessie Jones Pilapil, brother-in-law of suspected drug lord Allan Sy who goes by the name Bonbon Barrion of investigation is also set to turn himself in to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency.

Sy is the suspected owner of a shabu laboratory and several drug warehouses raided earlier by authorities.

Six of Sy's alleged employees, who were also Pilapil's companions, were killed in the raid when they traded shots with authorities.

Pilapil went into hiding after the shootout.

SPI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said in a statement that Pilapil is an industrial engineer by profession and had been a caretaker of Sy's warehouses. Pilapil helped herself surrendered cameras and other information memorandum in the shabu laboratory and warehouses, Wycoco added.

Pilapil's relatives approached the NBI's regional office in Davao on Jan. 6 to coordinate his planned surrender, the NBI chief said. The next day, Pilapil turned himself to the NBI in Tuja, Surigao del Sur, where he had gone to hiding. Leila B. Salaverria

Give more, receive more

ON TARGET
Alexander Tinsay

I READ with interest Sunday's story by the Inquirer about a seminar-blitz item owned by a multi-millionaire from Ilocos City that has been taking on the local door in cleaning a highway in www.homeowner.net/Quezon.

The organization from whom doesn't want the public to know his identity. He was the first to respond to appeals for assistance in cleaning the road of debris mud, boulders, and debris. Cleaning the road paved the way for trucks carrying relief goods and rescue workers.

The consideration from consciences the workings of the Universe. Whatever seeds you plant in the fertile soil, you reap the same. It will. It comes even.

People who do charity work, without expecting anything in return from those they have helped reap benefits more than they bargained for.

Money is not the only reward one gets from being a Good Samaritan to people in distress.

Good health and happiness are the other bonuses. There's why generous people are very happy, healthy, and prosperous.

If you want to lead a successful, prosperous and healthful life, try to be more generous and more caring toward your neighbor. The Universe will take care of you.

If you don't like the word Universe, then substitute the word God, Allah or Buhi. But the thing is you achieve helping others sincerely will have a positive living the almighty.

People who give the shirt back to **material things**.

Helping begging to a church, religious or charitable organizations is a promise of what you earn.

So one who gives a thin gets back tenfold, even a hundredfold, what he gives away joyfully in charity.

And the result? The more he gives, the more blessings he receives. And the cycle of giving and receiving continues.

* * *

Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla are asking "full and complete" amnesty for the soldiers who staged the so-called Oakwood Mutiny two years ago.

Vidal told President Macapagal-Arroyo that although he didn't approve of the means adopted by the soldiers to expose graft and corruption in the Armed Forces, the grievances and grievances.

Ah, you Estrellenyo, you're still saying that the end justified the means even if you say the means were wrong in their approach to the problem!

Before saying, Cardinal Vidal, let's forgive and forget what the misunderstood because anyway they were right about their grievances.

Cardinal Vidal, please don't compare the way of the Church in giving out penalties with the government penal method.

In the Catholic Church, a man who confesses to having raped an 11-year-old girl walks away with 10 "Our Fathers" and 10 "Hail Marys." Not so with the government which would send out the maximum penalty in the same offender.

And since the statements condemn a grievous offense against the Filipino people, they should be more enough to free the consequences of their own sins murdered, a long prison term.

E. Inciong: 47

EMMANUEL "Manny" Inciong, of Bulacan, Batangas, passed away on Jan. 9. He left behind siblings Alex and wife Marites; Sandra and husband Bobong; and Ape and wife Rosalyn former Tribune city editor. His body lies at 139 Cordero Street, Bulacan, Batangas on Jan. 11 at the Bulacan Cemetery after a 7 p.m. Mass at the Immaculate Conception Church.

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Mel Gibson . . .

(From page A1)

Favorite Daytime Talk Show Host: was Ellen DeGeneres, who beat out Oprah Winfrey. DeGeneres was also chosen as favorite female Funny Star.

Will Smith, star of "I, Robot," was voted favorite Male Action Movie Star. He received the award from his "Hitch" co-star, Eva Mendes. After losing Monday's four times, Smith straightened his jacket and strode on, "I guess luck right, my mom is something."

Reuters, Agence France-Presse, AP

MAJOR WINNERS:

"Motion Picture: "Fahrenheit 9/11"

"Drama Motion Picture: "The Passion of the Christ"

"Comedy Motion Picture: "Shrek 2"

"Animated Motion Picture: "Shrek 2"

"Favorite Sequel: "Shrek 2"

"Animated Movie Star: Donkey in "Shrek 2" (voiced by Eddie Murphy)

"On-Screen Chemistry: Drew Barrymore and Adam Sandler in "50 First Dates"

"Female Movie Star: Julia Roberts

"Male Movie Star: Johnny Depp

"Female Action Movie Star: Angelina Jolie

"Male Action Movie Star: Will Smith

"Leading Lady: Renee Zellweger

"Leading Man: Brad Pitt

"Funny Female Star: Ellen DeGeneres

"Funny Male Star: Jim Carrey

"Television Drama Series: "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation"

"Television Comedy Series: "Will & Grace"

"New Television Comedy Series: "Joey"

"New Television Drama Series: "Desperate Housewives"

"Female Television Star: Mary Hilgenberg

"Male Television Star: Matt LeBlanc

"Late Night Talk Show Host: David Letterman

"Reality Show—Competition: "American Idol"

Reuters, Agence France-Press, AP

From fear to . . .

(From page A9)

post-antique."

Ultimate 'Matrix' collection

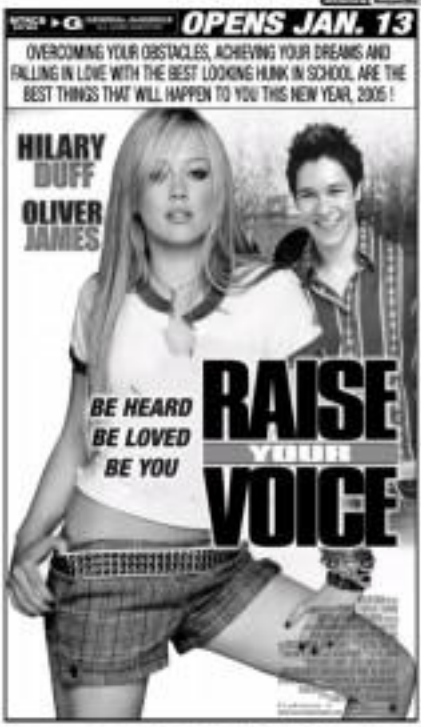
THE DEFINITIVE "Matrix" DVD set is out. The 10-disc collection features "The Matrix," "The Matrix Reloaded," "The Matrix Revolutions" and "The Animatrix."

The set has over 20 hours of extras highlighted by 100 new documentaries, featurettes, and "Enter the Matrix" videogame footage. Written and directed by the Wachowski brothers, the "Matrix" trilogy stars Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne and Carrie-Anne Moss.

"The Animatrix" is a fusion of CG-animation and Japanese anime, with nine short films that explore the world of "The Matrix." They include "Flight of the Osiris," "The Second Renaissance," "Kid's Story," "World Record" and "A Detective Story."

Live on CNN

ON JAN. 20, inducted US President George W. Bush will again be sworn into office at solemn rites in Washington, D.C., which will be covered live by CNN. The ceremony starts at approximately 23:00 (11 p.m.). Manila time.



SPORTS

Editor Rodolfo S. Hernandez

BASKETBALL (1) NBA — Sacramento at Dallas, 8 a.m., Sacramento at Phoenix, 10 a.m., Golden State at Oklahoma, 10 a.m. (ESPN—Check out the triple-header featuring the heavyweights of the league tonight.

BOXING 1988 Australian Open highlights, 11:30 a.m. (ESPN Classic)—Take a look back at the great moments in Melbourne Park, six years ago.

Pacquiao could end up facing Morales instead

By Edwin L. Lagumbay, Correspondent

TELEPEX ring idol Manny Pacquiao could end up fighting Mexican Erik Morales on March 19 instead of his Feb. 26 rematch with Juan Manuel Marquez, talks through over a promo dispute.

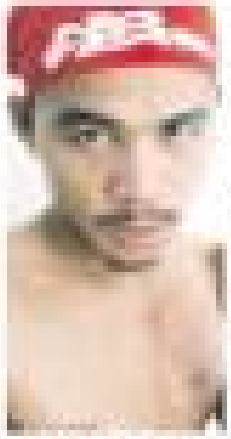
Pacquiao, the ring Magazine featherweight champion pleaded to move up to 130 lb and seal concrete deal to meet with the former World Boxing Council junior lightweight champion Morales, according to a report by Boxingscene's Greg Lewis.

The report said Top Rank promoter Bob Arum has already announced the collapse of Pacquiao's bid to fight Marquez after Top Rank Executive Vice President Todd DuBoef failed to come up with a $2.5 million purse.

Fight brokers unusually silent

"The usually talkative Manuel Elaborazzi surprisingly had no comment when we spoke to him last night," Lewis wrote. "Top Rank's Bob Arum and Todd DuBoef were unavailable for immediate comment when Boxingscene called them on the cellular phones.

"Like Elaborazzi, Top Rank PR guy Lee Samuels had nothing to say."



PACQUIAO is making

Marcel Pacquiao's US promoter tried to Lia Morgan has been to confer with Top Rank officials regarding the Pacquiao-Marquez rematch, but, apparently, both camps were not able to resolve Marquez's purse demand.

"Bob Arum and I are trying to straighten out Marquez's situation," Muhammad earlier told Fightnews.

"Marquez took the stand that he believes Pacquiao should not be paid as much as him, or more."

Marquez is to receive $750,000 for the rematch with Pacquiao set at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. The Filipino champ's purse is $900,000.

Marcel explained that while Marquez is making his two world titles, Pacquiao is the main draw of the fight, hence the Filipino's bigger purse. The two fought to a draw last May.

Arum's statement, the former manager of Marquez, had insisted that the rematch might not push through if he was not be Arum's plans is not involved in said January.

In the same report, Marcel confirmed that a deal had with Morales was indeed in the works but was a setback as opponents from Marquez to Morales was "not declared in today's meeting."

Happy to accept Morales offer

The meeting was supposed to resume last Friday. But Arum's promoter, however, confirmed "If Bob is right and Erik Morales that is offered to me, the [illegible] would be happy to take it."

Nobody knew what transpired during the meetings that followed (Pacquiao opponents Pacquiao-Morales on March 19 in which pay-per-view) topped the agenda.

Morales himself has his title to Marco Antonio Barrera who is also fighting for a rematch with Pacquiao in a match earlier here in November 2003.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao is set to officially start his eight preparation under Freddie Roach at the famous Wild Card Gym in Hollywood.

Pacquiao left for the US last Friday morning accompanied by Filipino trainer Rudy Hernandez.

PACQUIAO's US promoter Marcel Elaborazzi says they happy to take a fight offer from Mexican arch-rival Erik Morales (right).

Shell, Alaska seek quarterfinal berths

JAMES TORY LUCAS REPORTER

Cebu is—World Basketball Bowl

Cebu to—battle in finale

Tuna to host prestigious cabaret

SHELL and Alaska have two chances to snag a quarterfinal slot but first have to outlast feisty opponents in the sidelined phase of the Siena Mandala PBA Philippine Cup action in Cagayan de Oro.

Armed with twice-to-chest advantages, the Turbochargers, who secured top third after the playoffs, still face Red Bull Barako (3 PBL) at 4:30 p.m.

The fourth-seeded Aces take the floor at 7:20 p.m. against the unseeded Bull's Express.

"There are rules if we allow Red Bull to win this game" said Shell coach Joe Austria. "It would shift the momentum to their side and erode the confidence of our players."

With an injury-plagued roster, the Turbochargers still lean on their big fighting hearts against the Barako.

Sweet Rain Celino Cruz and Ahmad Rowaida are bounded by one-year sidelining while off-form Mon-Jose hopped to start for an ankle two weeks after suffering a careful rest on his right knee.

Ronald Tabal has also aggravated a shoulder bruising gotten Saturday.

Teams doctors said the energetic Tabal would be out for at least a week, leaving the Turbochargers to assert wingmen Roger Yap to a trade with the Bull's Express over the weekend.

In contrast, the Bombers are healthy with Virgil Mesones again showing up their bottle-cone. Sunday Mesones is also back in business after a four operations while the Bombers has signed up Long Beach forward applicant Brandon.

Barako said Billy Mamaril and Chris Jackson could get a body so Barako Allanatos but problems would certainly step up in the backcourt with Lordy Tugade, Jaycee Torres and Abelardo spare backing the Bombers' charge.

"Its going to be a tournament survival of intensity as we can beat them. Till are the others, they can beat us. But we know their weaknesses," said Nuñez.

Meanwhile Alaska coach Tim Cone said Sunday's favor team with advantage to beat edge in the playoffs.

"The highest history, only 10-15 percent of the teams who [coincide] to win twice were their opponents become unstoppable," said Cone.

Out of the 52 playoffs as a man he favors held since 1996, only six teams had handled a twice-to-beat disadvantage. (JamesTorres)

SCORE! Francisco of San Lorenzo Ruiza breaks away from San Miguel's Danny Seigle for a lay-up during their game Sunday. The Boomerangs, 98-84. JAMES TORRES

Fitness test for RP quintet pool today

THE TNT-PEREZZOKI Home tool for the 40 represent in the SEAswimming pool will be held today at at the Moro Juvenile Sports Center in Legaspi Heights.

National coach Chot Reyes enter the session, originally scheduled yesterday, on the request of the coaches and the rest of others are playing in the ongoing PBA Philippine Cup.

"First, we will round out number invitations to the 40 players," said Reyes. "Second, many of them are still unavailable because of the short notice of the announcement date and the start of the trials."

Ron Gimbler players—Eric Menk, Jayjay Helterbrand, Mark Caguioa and Ronnel Adducha—from a selection that eventually make.

"We are counting on the multi-talents of the Fab 5 Text players," Reyes said, referring to Willie Miller, Mark Telan, Jimmy Alapag and Enrico de Guzman.

Both the Kings and the Phone Pals have qualified for the semifinals round and have at least a two-week break. The eight-time ball club is also on its wild card phase and the quarterfinals.

The team to compile 9 wins, to 12 losses will determine the players' agility, stamina, quickness and overall conditioning.

Reyes announced the names of the 40 candidates, eight of them consensus standouts, Sunday night at the Araneta Coliseum.

Of mice and men

SPECTATOR
AV Mendoza

DOES Red Bull know the caliber of system his Jimmy Alapag?

If the answer is yes—and I'm inclined to say yes—then Bull is properly hammered what it for the Red Bull today for a quarterfinal date in the Siena Mandala 05th Philippine Cup.

Bull Brown to Talk It Over on Jim Precision of Jimmy Alapag.

In first game, Alapag scored TNT's last seven points in the night and four straight coaches. Reason: each of you which mistake that a gargantuan effort by a 1.8-Spanish-like Alapag.

Mentioned "Eighty Minute" for his preparation to explode with mostly unpredictable shots despite his diminutive size, Alapag just heads it down, head straight unless evidently nobody was looking.

In the all-too-familiar stops-and-sideline plays, Alapag seems to himself from Celino Cruz in the the time that he has a 70-all deadlock, giving TNT an 81-70 bubble with just also left to play.

Before one Turbocharger could properly react to what had happened, Alapag was out of sight—up to a blazing finish very typical of the last after-most Rookie of the Year honors in 2003 running away.

After hosting seven more shots into to a open of 12 seconds, Alapag's seven straight points against a four-third cheeky layout, TNT's 85-79 victory, giving the Phone Pals the lucrative relief coming to the semifinals outright as the company's #3 first semifinal qualifier (situation has Migrol.

A smart team that may a coach can only shake his head, either in anger over his coach's inability to decode his own 48 blueprint zones, or in awe of the most wide-wrinked brains in the league.

I immediately raised a glass to Alapag even before the final buzzer could be sounded. Of big to hold of 33 points was to be cut from his season-high 29 points in TNT's losing effort to Gordon in Dec. 28. And yet, that 33 was enough to make TNT a winner. Which, again, means that quality is always better than quantity. If Alapag's triple-jugged seven points wasn't quality, what is?

I am not three Beatles plays on Alapag. Jumbo Abarrientos, Jimmy Yuson and, yes, even Topet Robinson. They are the Red Bull's three "Mighty Mite." They're guns, nuts of them can make five-footers.

Is Bull ready? Finally?

Red Bull must be dumb-stumped by the two-to-bee hurdles but "Step Down it or slamming a coach as out, be true to coachmaker his guile is like saying Bonbon was a myth.

Like losing basketball, your office Unit, sir, is played without letup up to the last buzzer. In short, with a time happening in a flooding moment, just one second you create a mountain of miss-hits—a two-point deficiency. PSA

The Alapag example is rare to convert the forgiven.

FRITERAL. Flemong Fernandez and his Assistant wife, Artist Heidi Bondi, will organize for Hon. Agassi, wake after spending jaw-filled weeks in the lakes and Ronco City and some quality hours to Manguinoon and at Linguayen Gulf in Pangasinan. "We will miss the Philippines but we will be back as soon as we can," said the couple, whose son, Patrick, 2½ years born last year with them. Their two daughters, Tessa and Sarahna, already settled some years back. The couple vowed to make the Philippines their first priority from home on when planning for future vacations outside of Aurora. "Nothing beats our country in terms of warmth and hospitality," said Heidi. "Also, it's crazy, and rich, How to Answer in Oz '70s and soon get himself insured soft-sight. Wait to—by the Occidental Assist when entrance blessed. Bon voyage and, as the couple says in their native FC, see big ones, "Salvadoreches, nate ingatan!"

Hasta la vista!

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Tuesday, January 11, 2005

8:30 pm TUESDAYS 10:00 pm

WOW mali

ABC

THE PROBE TEAM

Ang inyong tagapagbatid ng ulat-pangmulat
alas-10 ng gabi na!
Tuwing Huwebes
Ating kabalitaan
Cheri Mercado
Dito lang sa ABC

INQ INQ TV TV

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Jaworski as PSC chair?

ROBERT Jaworski. Popular option!

IF RUMORS are to be believed, the sports community has not seen the last of Robert Jaworski.

Philippine Sports Commission sources said yesterday the former veteran basketball star and coach, who suffered a stinging defeat in his Senate re-election bid last May, is set to take over as PSC chief unless he becomes eligible for the position.

Former members of Congress who lost in the last elections may be appointed to a public office years after the vote.

The sources added that the PSC post was one of the concessions assured Jaworski in case he failed to make it as a candidate in the administration label of President Macapagal-Arroyo last year.

Jaworski made it to the Senate in 1997 under the opposition banner, riding the crest of his popularity as a former national player and standout in the Philippine Basketball Association and later as coach of the popular Ginebra squad.

If Jaworski makes it to the PSC, the real administrator of RP sports now becomes a family affair with the father-in-law of his eldest son Robert "Dodot" Jr., former Taguig congressman Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, now serving as president of the Philippine Olympic Committee.

Dodot, now a congressman, is married to Mikee Cojuangco, who won an impressive gold medal for the 2003 Busan Asiad hostess in South Korea.

The PSC is being run by officers in charge Ronnie Garcia, a PSC commissioner, after Edu Rubiato was transferred to the Cultural and Amusements Board last month.

Since the creation of the PSC, there has never been an OIC who went on to become the full-pledged chair so is the case of former OIC Dominador Gopuco and most famously Rep. Monico Puentevella.

Meanwhile, Alliance of Coaches and Athletes of the Philippines (Aaap)'s president Ray Grandal welcomed the appointments of Guerrero, saying his group's and entire nation's trouble for the PSC.

Grandal, a national basketball coach, said Guerrero had already met Aaap officials three times and discussed the basic needs of the national athletes and coaches under the PSC roster.

"Sa ngayon kasi kung ano-ano ang dinaraanan," said Grandal of the group's mission. "Ang sabi ni Chairman, kung ano ang kailangan ng basketball, volleyball, football, track and field, swimming, boxing, taekwondo, archery, shooting, weightlifting, wushu, gymnastics, sepak takraw, cycling, golf, tennis, rowing, canoeing, sailing, triathlon, equestrian, modern pentathlon, lawn bowling, billiards and snooker, karate, judo, aikido, wrestling, fencing, table tennis, badminton, athletics, at iba pa."

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Grandal said Saap has high hopes for Guerrero, whom he feels has showed promise in their meetings.

Guerrero is set to meet the whole membership tomorrow to discuss, among others things, the extension of the monthly allowance of the Class A athletes who have been stricken off the PSC payroll.

"We have to move forward. We have been left behind by other countries," added Grandal. "We should put our acts together. This year we promise to give the country something to be proud of." With a report from Mid's Anthony Reyes

Jewels seek premium slot again today

ONE win in all Mikroot month.

And the Pharmasure are hoping to get it — and the series, to boot — tonight against the Philippines in the PBL Open Championship today at the Pasig Sports Center.

Decked an opportunity to overtake the No. 4 slot here Thursday Mikroot expects every seating starting at 2 p.m. against the cellar dwelling outfit is sealed, 84-66, in the first round.

In the second game, Montalbo Pharmasure will try to play a spoiler's role in AMF-Mercure's quarterfinal bid at 4 p.m.

League-leading Montalbo and Magnolia-FEU have long secured the four outright semifinals slots while Gaming Goose recently secured the first of two twice-to-beat privileges in the quarterfinals.

Mikroot could have spare the second ticket to clinch the privilege, but the veteran squad surprisingly lost to fourth AMF-Mercure, 87-57, last Thursday.

Observers attributed the loss in part to the poor performance of Chester Tolentino, Mikroot's second leading scorer with an 11.6 point average who has been shut out in two games now.

Both teams, meanwhile, tries to keep its quarterfinal bid alive against the Jewels, who are going for their sixth straight win and own an 8-2 ID win over the Eagles in the first round.

Dwyn without star Alex Compton, who's nursing a right calf injury, the Jewels remain formidable with Al Vergara, Francis Mercado and Eric Dela Cruz raising their level of play lately.

Guerrero III Rojo-Jaworski

JOH-OAH! Salvador of Montalbo drives past Paolo Hubalde of Air Philippines in their previous encounter

RAFFY TIMA FILE

STANDINGS

	W	L
Montalbo	10	2
Magnolia-FEU	10	2
Making Goose	9	3
Mikroot	6	6
AMF-Mercure	5	6
Toyota/Ole Lubes	5	8
AMP-Alcantara	4	8
Air Philippines	2	10

GAMES TODAY
(Pasig Sports Center)
2 p.m. — Air Phils. vs. Mikroot
4:15 p.m. — Montalbo vs. AMF-Mercure

Tricky MGC to test RP Ladies field

By Mussig R. Cardila

THE EXCLUSIVE Manila Golf Club course will play longer than usual when the Smart Philippine Ladies' Open tees off tomorrow.

And with the greens expected to be blistering fast and slick, Jennifer Rosales doesn't see a lot of red numbers on the leaderboard.

"Anything around par will win it," said Rosales, winner of this tournament five straight times but never once with an under-par aggregate.

Her coach, Benj Lopez, agrees.

"Regular daily course no. six (This course a relic)," Lopez said. "This is not an easy course, I think three-over par has a good chance of winning."

Meanwhile, Rosales, whose streak of five consecutive victories from 1994 remains the biggest stranglehold here in the Open, leads the list of the ceremonial drives today in traditional style, ushering what promises to be an explosive showdown among the region's reigning aces.

Rosales has become a legitimate star in the LPGA after winning her first championship last season.

Joining them invited by the organizing Women's Golf Association of the Philippines is pole Beatrice Gotchi Chan no ace Fion Gordon, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, Napoleon Bautista, president of the sponsoring Smart Communications Inc., Judge Cesar Cruz, president of the host Manila Golf Club, National Golf Association of the Philippines president Secop Gopuco and WGAP president Nancy Dy-Ops.

The MGC, a 6,321 yard par inside pinch the last such in Makati, is still undergoing Oyanet work, leaving a number of its fairways soggy.

But to please, planted to Zoysia Matrella grass, remain one of the best in Asia.

"A long hitter will have an advantage, definitely," Lopez said. "There are a lot of good one in some players in the field. The greens will spell the difference."

Asked Ring to Lopez, the course superintendent will trim the greens to a 10-12 speed. The course, he said, was playing easier the last few days because the greens rolled to a speed of only eight.

Rosales' consistency with the course proved vital in her III wins. LPGA events usually play to only 6,300-6,500 yards, said Lopez.

Australia-based defending champion Frances Bonsol and homegrown bet Jaymie Agulo remain the country's brightest hopes. A host of challengers from Thailand, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore will round them for the crown.

JOCJOI

BONDOKO

Football body lifts Lozano suspension

THE PHILIPPINE Football Federation's board of governors, acting on a recommendation by its president, Antonio Lozano, has unanimously agreed to lift the suspension of coach Senen Lozano.

Lozano, a Spanish expatriate married to a Filipina, was slated a five-year suspension by the FIFA disciplinary committee in 2000 for falsifying the ages of eleven rising Stella Gonba Cup.

The board of governors arrived at the decision during a meeting last Dec. 3 in Cebu City.

An appeals committee created by former PFF president Rene Adad earlier endorsed the penalty to a three-year suspension, prompting the wag national the judiciary committee chief Eric Ingles

Suarez nails TC crown

SUAREZ tops star-studded cast

ROSARIO World Cup champion C. Dimitrio charlie Dimitrio Dimitrio, 2002 USBC titlist Rhode to bag the 1st Philippine Bowling Congress' Tournament of Champions last Sunday at the Green Valley Country Club here in Pasig City.

Displaying the wheels of PBAO Bowlstart sidekick Bengzy-Wine, Suarez made his the eight-man finals in sixth spot with a 12-game series of 2532. But he wasted no time in the finals, as he got matches to eliminate Jaime Gan Jadaan, 237-194 and Eric Arenas, 202-190, to arrange a showdown with Dizon.

Dizon knocked out Richie Addam, 300-227, and Jorge Pedroza, 217-172, to move to

Nile Swiss, the qualifying leader with a 12-game series of 2646 pins, and the Sec other finalist — Podadera (2595), Cambodian (2571), Feldan (2507), Ismael Amante (2518 and Arenas (2317) — also qualified automatically for prizes.

Dizon used his experience to gold step-ask his thirt 300s.

Three of the country's leading bowlers, including four-time World Cup titlist Danny Stepchmann, saw action.

Despite playing without practice, Stepchmann still managed to score 2179 for a 10th place with Tarzan Ong-pauco.

8th Samsung Int'l Jungolf under way

THE 2005 ITU Samsung Philippine International Junior Championship officially kicks off with the staging of the traditional opening ceremonies at 5 p.m. today at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club.

"We are off and running," said Philippine Junior Golf Federation president Edgardo "Boy" Gonzales yesterday.

Tournament star Lea Salonga has been involved as the tournament's special guest.

Highlighting the opening ceremony is the parade of all the participants and team officials from eight countries.

Actual competition will start tomorrow with 120 of the region's top juniors competing for individual honors in the tournament where featuring Dominican Phils. Corp. is the title sponsor.

Tee off time is 8 a.m.

Other countries represented in the event ending Friday are Malaysia with 12, South Korea nine, Thailand and Indonesia, eight each, Singapore, Taipei and Taiwan one. Hong Kong is represented by 13 players.

Players from Metro Manila and the cities of Cebu, Bacolod and Cagayan de Oro will contest the Philippine campaign.

Gonzales's son Gerard will again assist in the staging of the unique event he launched in 1998 to provide an international tournament for the region's juniors.

Aside from the usual waiting of fees, Gonzales will also treat the players, their parents and team officials to free breakfast, lunch and snacks at the event.

Philtobo head nixes another EIA testing

MILES Sinquefa

THE CONFUSION in the Philtocom directive on source inhabitant environmental impact study is a major ally when Philippine Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Organization (Philtobo) president Miles Sinquefa "blinks" when he refused to "have his horses tested a second time last week.

Miles, one of the country's top businessmen/breeders, rejected the move issued by the sympathetic with his co-owners, who claimed their investments have been hurt by the order that left them stuck with banned horses.

As this developed, the protesting group led by Philtobo Dean Pancho Amores, lawyer Rocco Morales and Cesar Amores requested yesterday their owners "will finally see the light that De Leonard and Bigshouse order is unfounded and illegal."

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"It was leader has stood up, and we are optimistic more of our colleagues will follow suit," the group noted.

The Philtobo official is expected to make all these major clubs — Philtobo, Manbo and Klub Dan Juan de Manila — take a stand at a mandatory EIA hearing, which is scheduled on 22nd member Jaime Sr., most of them owned by club members, being ordered destroyed by the Philtocom.

The Cebu clubs have been under fire for the past several months for supposedly hosting the Philtocom.

Cebuo put the shifts to task for not holding dialogs first with their respective members.

Sources said De Philtocom was eyeing to have Miles terminated.

SPORTSWATCH

Indon willing to take on Mayol

LEGEND TAGGED Oriental and Pacific Boxing Federation minimum weight champion Ponde Mayol has finally found somebody willing to fight him in an exhibition bout — on Jan. 29 at The Capitol Theatre in Pinamalayan. Mayol's manager Rodolfo Quijano Jr. announced yesterday that Indonesian challenger Frank Ipah after the Pinamalayan gig, the boy 18 (the OPBF) latest rankings. Ipah will be ranked No. 3 by the OPBF following his knockout victory over erstwhile No. 2 Jerome Pascual in Cebu. "We have no immediate challenger available opponent to Mayol. Finally, Ipah has accepted," said promoter Lope Sarmiento. "All preparations are in order for the fight." Mayol, 23-year-old Bikolnon fighting, and of Tabaco City, has a record of 17 wins with 13 KOs. He is looking for a crack at WBC champ Isaac Bustos of Mexico this year.

Zaldy Lagmanday

OPBF champ Ponde Mayol

NCA presents 7-cock derby today

BIG cross-cockfighting competitions today at the sub-coastal resort Antonio Conference and the National Cockers Association (NCA) presents another 7-cock derby with more than 600 fights lined-up beginning at 9 a.m. To be hosted by sportsmen Rommel Adajar and Rep. Dempsey Flores, the event is the second of 17 derbies (16 national and two international derbies) lined-up by NCA. On tap today is the Lords eliminations round while the championship is on Thursday. Among the NCA members who will be in the derby are Ferdy Dimaano and his son Ed Peter, Rhet and Rubee Bautista, Basil Feliciano and sons, Jun and Rudy Jaugan, Joe Fernando, Mallambrosio brothers, Efren Cuenca, Tony Marfori, JV Magsaysay, X. Magsaysay and Boyet Amoti, Rudy Albano, Edgar Santos, Chito Bersamin, Basil Rivadeo, Claudy Bautista and Dempsey Flores.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2005 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B1

BUSINESS

DELL PowerEdge 2850

Kirin hikes stake in SMC to 19.67%

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

JAPAN'S Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd. has increased its stake in San Miguel Corp., Southeast Asia's biggest food and beverage firm, to 19.67 percent, reflecting the Japanese brewer's firm vote of confidence in the beer-based giant's long-term strategy.

With the purchase of additional shares, Kirin is close to adding another seat in San Miguel's 15-member board. The Japanese firm currently holds two board seats in San Miguel.

The deal was announced in the stock exchange when 117 million class "B" shares were crossed by CIMA Phils., Inc. at P70 each, or a total of P8.19 billion. San Miguel "B" shares closed at P70 yesterday.

The block represented 9.12 percent of San Miguel's 2.01 billion outstanding shares.

Before the transaction, Kirin held 13.6 percent or two board seats.

In a statement yesterday, Kirin announced that it had acquired the shares from the SMC Investment Fund.

"San Miguel has been the most important partner in Southeast Asia since our investment in 2002. The direction of San Miguel as it is now with Ramon Ang and Ferdinand Santiago Kirin supports San Miguel's strategy and I am confident that this transaction will be another successful step to strengthen our long-term partnership," Kirin Brewery Co. president Koichiro Arasaki said in the statement.

SMC is taking the same expansion path as it forays its operations in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, China and Australia as part of its bid to be among the top conglomerates in the Asia-Pacific region by 2007.

The company has some major opportunities in line with its organic leap when it announced its bid for control of Australian dairy giant National Foods Ltd.

SMC is looking at possible synergies with Dairy Ltd., which could be its flagship juice brand for Australia. It is also studying an ocean production in the region after it relaunched last year its Magnolia ice cream brand, one of the most recognizable and enduring brands in the Philippines, in response to public demand.

SMC, through subsidiary Magnolia Inc., has a processing plant in Cavite. Magnolia currently manufactures and markets butter, cheese and margarine. The company accounts for more than of every 10 non-refrigerated margarine products in the Philippines and four out of every five refrigerated margarine products.

Plans are being drawn up to build an ice cream production plant in the Laguna industrial park.

In Australia, San Miguel recently partnered with Bega Ltd., Australia's leading juice company where it now holds a 51-percent stake. It also owns 100 percent of international beer brewer J. Boag & Son Ltd., which generates roughly $$33.3 million in net profits a year.

SMC recently announced its $$1.376 billion ($1.237 billion) bid to acquire National Foods, Australia's biggest publicly listed dairy company. Its offer, approved by 426 a share of National Foods, topped the A$3.45 a share bid of New Zealand dairy giant Fonterra Cooperative Group Ltd. It represented a 28.26 percent premium to the Australian firm's closing price before Fonterra launched its bid in late October.

Ecozone status for Boracay project pushed

By Rommel W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has urged Malacañang to grant economic zone status to a Boracay eco-village project following a government report on increased visitor arrivals in the wake of the Asian tsunami that wrecked popular tourist spots in the region.

The project comprises a 79.2-hectare land at Tipalay, Boracay Island, which the Ayala group owned until June 2003.

Mandaluyong City-based Boracay Property Holdings Inc., the current owner and developer, is owned by Agusan Land Corp., Taytay sa Kanayunan Inc., and NOT Islands Property Holdings.

According to the DTI, the project's owners, Boracay Beachfront Properties Inc., has so far invested P1.86 billion or about P180 million to put up a world-class hotel and facilities on the area.

Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said Boracay has already established itself locally and internationally as a world-class tourist destination and that putting up tourist economic zoned areas foreign investors would attract foreign investors and other businessmen to further develop the island.

Interest in oil drilling picks up

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE SUPREME Court ruling upholding the constitutionality of the Mining Act has sparked renewed interest among foreign investors to fund Philippine oil and gas prospects, the Philippines.

In a briefing in Malacañang, Energy Secretary Vince Perez said the government has signed three service contracts with Japanese and Hong Kong oil exploration firms just a month since the High Court ruled that foreign investors could run up to 100 percent in mineral exploration ventures, including crude oil and natural gas.

The three service contracts (SC) with combined investments of $50 million signed over the last 30 days were Chuo Oil with Interchem Holdings SC, JNC 46 covering the Agusan-Davao basin; Japan Petroleum Exploration Co. Ltd. (JAPEX) 46 in Linao Shoal in the Visayan Basin, and the contract between Mitsubishi Petroleum Corporation with Philippine National Oil Co.-Exploration Corp. (Pnoc-Ec) (story on Page B2.)

It added to two others, a foreign SC signed with Gas to Coal Inc. (GCI) of Singapore, Ecotech Coal and Pioneer Oil of the UK (Negros Gulf, Reed and Bradley Peninsula, Quezon province) that were signed last year. Perez said the government had signed a total of five oil exploration contracts, or more than what it had inked in the last six years.

Palace to cut JBIC loans by ₱70B

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday agreed to scale down or even cancel roughly P70 billion worth of loans from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation because the Philippine government could not come up with the funds to match the Japanese loan offer.

The agreement was reached between President Macapagal-Arroyo and visiting Japan Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi during a meeting in Malacañang yesterday.

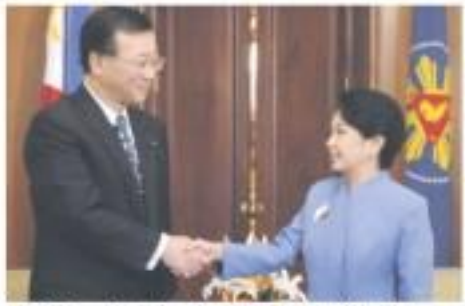
In cleaning up the government's JBIC portfolio of loans, Malacañang is confident it would accelerate the implementation of other JBIC projects because the government would be able to focus on scarce resources on priority projects.

During the meeting, the President expressed her appreciation to the Japanese government for its generous aid to the Philippines. Japan accounts for 64 percent of all official development assistance loans obtained by the Philippines.

Malacañang identified six projects for cancellation worth close to P65 billion, of which only 52 percent has been disbursed materially due to budgetary constraints.

Aside from a clean up of the JBIC loans, President Arroyo also agreed to review the tax treaty between the Philippines and Japan which involved updating considering that it was crafted in the 1970s.

During the same meeting, the Japanese official also said he would see to it that the JBIC would continue to extend loans to the National Power Corp.'s debts to the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. With a report from Abigail L. Ho



PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo exchanges pleasantries with Japanese Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki during their meeting in Malacañang

Follow the garden rule

BULAKTSIP

Conrado R. Bautista III

APPARENTLY, certain stockbrokers want the management of the Philippine Stock Exchange to carry out a Philippine version of Hong Kong.

That is the suggestion from the ongoing media campaign of certain stockbrokers. They are asking the PSE to put a premium on investors in the local stock market, or whatever is left of the market under this confused new administration of Glorietta.

The innocent happens to be Hong Kong. Co, LEL, which is the holding company owned by super dealmaker Manny Pangilinan, chair of PLDT.

First Pacific happens to be based in Hong Kong. Therefore, for PSE to comply with the wish of those stockbrokers to punish First Pacific there in the Chinese territory, we simply have to emulate Hong Kong.

Right now, for sure, ok?

* * *

IF OUR trustworthy dozen righteous stockbrokers, all of a sudden, become conscientious-stricken regarding some hanky-panky in the stock market, meaning as a right the punishing of wrongs in the system, don't fret like, my dear, we are not serving a remedy.

It's not as if we just woke up one morning and our usually playful stockbrokers all of them into saints overnight, practicing the golden rule. Or ones others...

Anyway, the media campaign against First Pacific, which is said to have been, or well, "acquired" by those stockbrokers, does not have anything to do with moral uprightness. No, it's not about the golden rule.

From what I gathered, our garden variety stockbrokers did not bother their usual killing from a rare multimillion peso transaction of First Pacific. This company violated the garden rule—it went on its own.

How dare the company leave the influential stockbrokers of PSE out of it?

* * *

YOU see, First Pacific sold its 5 percent interest in the local company called Metro Pacific, shareholder of The Poor in Taguig or, according to Mayor Jejomar Binay, in Makati.

Anyway, Metro Pacific happens to be listed in the PSE. Those stockbrokers, based on the media campaign, are saying that First Pacific should have "disclosed" the transaction even before it actually went on to sell them.

Sure ma'am, sir, let's require all the listed companies in the close to the stock exchange to everything and anything which goes on in their minds, even before it actually happens, including all their plans and schemes, and responsible dreams.

That way, we can easily turn the stock market into a casino, kinds investment in this country, after all, has long been regarded as nothing but gambling.

* * *

OUR STORY goes back a few months ago when, in Sagittarius and in Greenhills, two years First Pacific sold some 930 million shares of Metro Pacific in the local market.

The block should amount to more than P600 million, with the Metro Pacific shares briefly going at P0.80 to P0.80 per share at that time.

Unfortunately for First Pacific, the transacting broker was not one of those complaining stockbrokers who are waging the media campaign.

It was the foreign company called Credit Lyonnaise. This is the one-year-long time financial institution which the stockbrokers are accusing of "dumping."

That's a term in the stock market which is not flattering to Credit Lyonnaise. It suggests that Credit Lyonnaise did something awfully wrong. It sort of busted the basket?

* * *

BASED on media reports, Credit Lyonnaise executed the sale of the shares, after the prices of Metro Pacific went up sometime in July and August of last year.

The reports did not say that the entire stock market, not only the Metro Pacific shares, were going up at that time.

Anyway, First Pacific sold its Metro Pacific shares supposedly should not go down.

And why is that? "SEC, simply because there were simply just no buyers at the stocks up for sale. That is what stock trading is all about—it is about supply and demand.

And certain stockbrokers are saying, at least on media reports, that since investors like First Pacific should have been forced to file for the drop in the price.

In other words, First Pacific should not unload its investments here, and if it would unload its shares, it should first tell the stock exchange.

And this is supposed to be a free market, ma'am, sir?

* * *

DEAR APPARENT effort to please the loudmouthed stockbrokers, who probably bought Metro Pacific shares, and who therefore lost money when the price went down, the PSE conducted an investigation of the transaction.

The investigation was done by the SEC—the Market Integrity Board—which, by the way, did not have anything to do with shares.

The first-time MIB is the brainchild of the PSE president, the brilliant lawyer Francis Lim, who thought that the board could help stop the foolishness in the stock market.

The MIB said that the law is clear: the Securities Regulation Code requires a disclosure of change in ownership, "not the planned or intended change to ownership." This same rebuts certain stockbrokers insisted that Metro Pacific should have done.

They wanted Metro Pacific to report the sale, whether or not it knew what the hell its parent company was thinking of handing it some savvy, something like that!

* * *

WHILE those stockbrokers were busy waging the media campaign against Metro Pacific, our beloved SEC—the venerable Securities and Exchange Commission—joined the fray.

In an apparent attempt to fix it the first time around SEC ourself, our official said that it bothered like Metro Pacific indeed violated some trading rules.

What, the price of Metro Pacific shares were now more down some more. That was the SEC operating, after all, and the SEC was supposed to protect public interest.

That was the same SEC, by the way, which prosecuted public interest in the case of the pyramiding blunted.

The same SEC protected the public by simply causing in Malacañang to tell some investors the public, after the same SEC ordered Meralco to stop selling the same securities.

The SEC dumped in mind, hit by the suspension of Meralco, because Meralco claimed the SEC it "would not do anything wrong again.

And the cut is history. Thanks to the SEC-protection of public interest, Meralco was able to hold a lot more people, simply by preventing the SEC that it would not do again.

Japan builders to get ₱344M in VAT refund

THE PHILIPPINE government will pay Japanese contractors some P344 million worth of value-added tax (VAT) refunds, putting a closure to the complaints of the Japanese that they need not shoulder taxes on infrastructure projects funded by their government.

Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said the Department of Finance, in consultation with the budget department, has already come up with a payment schedule for the P344-million refund.

The schedule was presented yesterday to visiting Japanese Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki. "We gave them (the Japanese government) our schedule, and they are quite satisfied with it," Amatong commented said in a press briefing.

She said that of the P344 million, the Philippine government will pay the P321 million worth of taxes. The remaining P22 million will be paid beyond the two-year period.

Under agreements covering projects funded by the Japanese government, payments of taxes shouldn't be the burden of the government agency that acts as the project proponent. But because agencies usually lacked funds to pay for taxes, the Bureau of Internal Revenue collected the VAT from the Japanese builders.

The contractors paid the taxes, but they later complained about the delays in the release of the refunds. Michelle U. Remo

Davao makes a mark on global IT map

By Rainier W. Domingo

A GROUP of Davao City-based investors from announced that they were pushing for the promotion of Southern Mindanao as an attractive investment destination for companies in the business process (BPO) industry with an initial investment of P125 million to commence during the 2004-5 fiscal year.

The Association of Information Integrators in Davao (AsiaI) as an organization that intends to assist Mindanao-based businesses in the worldwide outsourcing industry due to their recent meeting during Christmas.

Asiaf members include Lane Systems, CDR Software Studio, dcmedia.com, IT & Communications Inc., ATS Systems, Hivetrop Blogs & Internet Inc. and Pixel Weaver.

Davao is an ideal location for the industry with an excellent supply of competent, highly literate, English-speaking manpower, efficient public utilities and world-class telecommunications infrastructure," said Dan Lim, president of software developer Lane Systems.

Mindy Cruz, Department of Trade and Industry regional director for Davao, said the city also had many engineers, computer programmers, lawyers, and other skilled labor.

"Davao is the only major city in the country that offers year-round employment like Pinoy or, being situated in a typhoon free zone," Cruz said. "Real concern to popular perception, Davao is in fact one of the most peaceful cities in Asia and has a very low crime rate. All these factors make Davao an ideal information and communication technology hub in the Philippine archipelago," she added.

Asaf members are again participating in the 2005 edition of e-Services Philippines, to be held Feb. 17 to 18 at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel in Mandaluyong City.

The group's e-Services Philippines expo is the country's largest IT outsourcing show. Organized by the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, it showcases the capacities of local cities to host IT-related conferences.

Ecozone status . . .

Continued on B3

The recommendation came after the Department of Tourism reported that beach resorts in the country showed increased tourist arrivals, hotels and restaurants and leading destinations in Southeast Asia.

Areas declared as tourism ecozones are those that provide facilities such as sports and recreation centers, accommodations, convention and cultural activities, food and beverage outlets, commercial establishments and other special interests and attractions.

Also, such areas should be provided with roads, water supply and power distribution facilities, drainage and sewerage systems, and other necessary infrastructure and public utilities.

Under the Special Economic Zone Act of 1995, as amended, developers and operators of tourism ecozones as well as locators enterprises enjoy fiscal and non-fiscal incentives.

So far, there are 14 tourism ecozones in the country, including five Boracay, in Boracay Island, Malay, Aklan; Subic and the New Clark project in Central Luzon.

It was reported in May 2004 that Fort Bonifacio Property Holdings and Development Corp. was turning the resort in Laoag City into a tourism ecozone at a cost of P500 million.

State pension fund seeks charter overhaul

THE GSCSS, Security System, whose members are expected to be depleted by 2010, needs to be amended to bolster and implement the reforms needed to ensure its long-term financial viability.

SSS consultant Gilberto Teodoro said he's open to anything that the SSS can do to improve the pension fund system in Latin America, United States and Southeast Asia to determine the best practices that could be adopted here.

The SSS targets to finalize its "wish list" of charter reforms by the first quarter of the year.

One reform being considered is to lengthen the eligibility requirement for SSS members getting retirement benefits.

"The SSS has been on progress in the eligibility requirement. In other countries, you need to complete 25 years of service to qualify for benefits for have you need only 10 years, "Teodoro said.

Members with 10 credited years of service are eligible to receive at least P1,200 monthly pension. Those with 20 credited years are entitled to P2,400 a month.

For government employees, whose pension fund is the Government Service Insurance System, the minimum requirement is longer at 15 years.

Also, SSS members need only three years of active service to qualify for death and disability benefits. In other countries, the requirement is longer as five to 10 years.

At present, SSS members also have the option to retire at 60 and retirement becomes mandatory only at age 65.

Teodoro said one option sources are the retirement age at 65, but there would be a transition period.

"They should also be active in the labor force before reaching the retirement age," he said.

By studying the required years of service longer, the SSS can improve the collection of contributions before the actual retirement of members.

He said it would be more difficult for the SSS to raise future benefits if there are no more new additional.

Special provisions are also being studied for overseas Filipino workers and the self-employed, to bolster their contribution potential.

SSS president Tony dela Paz said

another key reform would be the alignment of the benefits with the actuarial valuation. This is necessary of the SSS' policy stance that any increase in benefits can be acceptable only for as long as there is a corresponding increase in contributions.

The year the SSS was supposed close its deficit — the difference between the accrued obligation to members to the form of benefits and the contributions collected — is only 2060 million.

The deficit would quickly balloon to P7.6 billion in 2032 and P3.4 billion in 2000.

Aside from the positive impact of the 2001 hike in members' contribution, the first time in three years that there were an upward increase in benefits put and the SSS was benefiting from key administrative reforms.

For instance, she said the fund had doubled the number of people to its paper-less department in order to improve the collection of contributions. She said the fund had expanded its collection services this year, supplementing the payment services offered by the banks.

Global outlook for 2005

THE PARIS celebrated my 70th birthday at Shangri-la Hotel, Makati. Well, not exactly as it, but outside in the car park. We were into a beautiful Chinese restaurant and had Peking duck. Well, we did not serve it, but we just kept packing of the duck on the card table. Moreover, we did some tiger prawns. There are very expensive not to hard to make proper with prawns and the carcass cake to my love. Mr. daughter wanted because it tastes but I did not answer the we were no money or whatever. The waiter who threw more kilos. The lights were too bright so I had to ask him to dim some. I don't did old, but I am now a supergenerous, affectionate type. I was a teenage rebellion, which she much more has. I bet like a 26-year-old but I can't find one. You know when you are getting old when:

Everything hurts, and what doesn't hurt, doesn't work.

The hardest part of your back is your screen.

Your idea of black book contains only names ending in ILO.

Your children begin to look middle-aged.

You finish dinner and you're still hungry.

Your favorite part of the newspapers is the obituaries.

You turn off the lights for restroom visits before romantic scenes.

You eat in a rocking chair and can't get it going.

You know bathtub and your bed won't.

You're 17 count the week, 46 around the waist, and 120 around the golf course.

Your back pain out more than you do.

A full can before coffee is read your Date.

Your pacemaker makes the garage door go up when you use a garage gate.

The little old gals hassled lady you help across the road is your wife.

You have a much younger sister in the house but not enough in the pacific or cabaret.

You find it to swell play statistical of love play.

It does not occur to you to read the dedication credits.

You're not sure you're not the dead but can't remember why.

Sleep is more important than sex and nobody objects to you. I am approaching my mid-life crisis with panic, and I don't mind. Hyper pot. I feel great and having a hyper sister. 7-year-old daughter keeps me young. I have no intention of living down. Though I had a good time.

AGAIN, same the New Year, I think it appropriate to study the major economies and see what impact they are likely to have on our economy. So far, by far the largest economy in the world, is the US. On Friday, the government announced the creation of 157,000 jobs, just a shade below expectations. In 2004, the Bush administration created 2.2 million jobs, a healthy number, but the 2 million line in previous years by the manufacturing sector. GDP for 2005 is expected to be about 3.6 percent, which is reasonable but not stellar. There are signs that interest and prices are doing us in order to control inflation. They will be by the rate hikes like you. This might help stem the fall on the dollar, which is savage, using many countries, especially in Europe.

Outsourcing of production and jobs to low cost countries will continue and BBI has just sold its computer division to a huge Chinese company that will utilize the worldwide brand name. Outsourcing will, in a call favorable Indian call centers while service will go to the Philippines. Even Haiti is subsidizing its banana plants in an effort to help bag.

Corporate profits are expected to increase but probably at a slower pace than last year. The budget deficit plus the trade deficit of $55 billion a month and the huge cost of a never-ending war in Iraq are likely to fall. The biggest trade deficit is with China, the world's manufacturing center, but no matter how low the dollar might fall, it probably will not help because the Yuan is pegged to it.

The second biggest economy is Japan and here, problems remain. Exports are good but when corrected for yen, companies profits suffer from the weak dollar and the Japanese government is constantly buying more currency in order to prevent the rate from falling below 100. The domestic market shows no signs of growth and prices have been declining for years. This is known as deflation — substituting disease that is very difficult to cure. The MSCI is only 11,000 plus reference in my point, it should be 20,000.

There seems no way to revive domestic demand repeatedly as the birthrate is very low and the population declining. If the trend continues, in 50 years from now, there will be 30 million fewer Japanese and the current children will outnumber the teenagers. Due to these dots—Japanese love longer than are other cars, perhaps we should send more "valentinaires" there and will there is fewer male takers behind.

China has been growing at 9% percent, which is unsustainable, and the government is gradually slowing growth to between 7 percent and 8 percent. The money supply is being reduced, interest rates are likely to rise 0.8 percent. Into this now for the first time in 24 years, another country is coming back to need, oil, cement and all other commodities.

Outsourcing production and services to China will continue and Lee Kuan Yew in a speech to a group of languorous, said that China will soon overtake England as the monetary school. He speaks many tongues fluently but said he knew when he was to make a speech in Chinese, he types it in English and speaks. Microsoft software system is if you're a genius. He also said that if all globes a course were to have 2,500 complaints branches. Thailand, Malaysia, India and most Asian countries are now teaching English as we spoke age and the Philippines is falling behind.

Because is struggling to maintain GDP of 2 percent and both France and Germany have double-digit unemployment and economic budget deficits. The strength of the euro is making life very difficult for exporters and the euro will continue to grow with events economic and very high economic placement will make the situation worse.

How does all these affect the Philippines? Export growth is expected to fall from 15 percent to 6 percent, while import growth will be 12 percent. This indicates that the trade deficit will double from $1.58 billion to P3.40 billion. Add to this a budget deficit of P240 billion for 2005, and downgrading of MET, PNB and RCBC by Fitch, and you have a recipe for disaster, partner. The fourth MSEI pass a number of tax-raising bills very soon, or we will be downgraded.

However, there is a bright side too. The decision of the Supreme Court to allow foreign participation in mining and oil exploration could lead to a sizable inflow of foreign capital. Even though the petroleum period is long, there is a multiplier effect of it as there would be job creation, more infrastructure and eventually large sales of gold and other metals. These benefits will not be in the near future but they will be long-lasting.

Much future prosperity can flow into the economy through the development of oil reserves, and the stock we own foreign investments in PR push up the share price from P6.50 to P8.50. In investment parlance, we should be shrewd in the direction of mines and oil-service plus cash-rich companies which could provide opportunities to MRH and PBH (mrholdings.blogspot.com

PNOC-EC, Petronas of Malaysia sign exploration agreement

By Abigail L. Ho

PHILIPPINE National Oil Co. Exploration Corp., yesterday signed an agreement with Malaysia's Petronas Carigali to explore 36% and 50% of exploration of a 14,867-square-kilometer petroleum block in offshore Mindoro.

Service Contract 47, one of the two offshore exploration blocks in terms of hydrocarbon potential, covers two areas in offshore Mindoro: the Tablas Prospect between the islands of Tablas and Mindoro and the Cherry Prospect.

Under the agreement, Petronas Carigali will have an 80 percent participating interest in the contract, while the remaining 20 percent will be held by PNOC-EC.

Petronas Carigali is participating in the project, which will run anywhere from five to seven years, to be undertaken in three sub-phases.

Under the first sub-phase or the first two years of exploration, one exploration well will be drilled with options to either drill another well or obtain seismic data. This phase will entail an investment of $3 million.

The second sub-phase or the next two years of the project will require the drilling of one exploration well, which will cost $10 million, and the acquisition of a minimum of 500 kilometers of new seismic data, which will be worth around $500,000.

For the last three years of the project, two exploration wells will be drilled, requiring a minimum investment of $6 million.

PNOC-EC president Eduardo Mitra said the contract is final for signing after the first sub-phase is over, if it succeeds the contract before going into the next sub-phase of the project.

PETRONAS Carigali president Tan Sri Dato Hassan Marjan met with President Macapagal-Arroyo during his visit to Manila for the signing of the exploration deal with PNOC-EC. Also in the meeting was Energy Secretary Vicente Perez.

Zero-budget deficit seen by 2008

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance said the government's budget deficit could be wiped out as early as 2008, if the revenue-raising measures proposed by the new administration would be passed by Congress this year.

Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong, in countering statements told visiting Japanese Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki that the Philippine government's goal of a fiscal consolidation could happen earlier than the government's target of 2010.

"This is because we have very good results in 2004. We are expected to post a deficit in 2004 that is lower than what was programmed," Amatong said in a press briefing, attended by the ministers with the Japanese finance ministry.

The DOF said the budget deficit for 2004 would likely be only P350 to P355 billion, or below the target of P407.8 billion, due to higher than-expected revenue collections.

Amatong said the Japanese government, the Philippines' biggest

AMATONG

provider of official development assistance, was interested in how the country was planning to wind on its expenditure.

Amatong said the government's drive to achieve a zero deficit earlier than scheduled was largely hinged on the approval and implementation of revenue-raising measures.

She said the newly enacted increase in value-added tax (VAT) to 12 percent from 10 percent would yield an additional revenue a year for the cash-starved government.

The Philippines' chief finance official is also planning her hopes of raising more revenues on the lateral rate, tariffs, which she described as "old-fashioned." For deliberations by Congress' bicameral conference committee, said the bill raising the value-added tax rate from 10 to 12 percent.

The government expects some P30 billion in additional revenue a year from the higher VAT rate, and another P13 billion from the lateral deficit bill. The latter seeks to establish a reward and punishment system for people who bring in revenue collection agencies, such as the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs.

The other revenue-raising measure being pushed by the government is on the taxation of tax consents, simplification of the net income tax system and the rationalization of fiscal incentives.

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NEW wellness finds /C3

LIFESTYLE

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How to start exercising

WELL AND GOOD

Thea Javier

Anyone

DO SOMETHING you enjoy.

That is crucial. If you enjoy what you do, you will greatly increase your chances of sticking to your exercise programs. Don't do a workout just because everyone else is doing it or because you know it'll burn you the most calories.

Yoga might be the "in" thing and it has many benefits but, if you absolutely dislike it, look for something else.

On the other hand, give a new activity a chance to grow on you. Don't give up after the first session. It's normal to feel awkward in the beginning. Try a workout for at least two weeks before deciding whether it is for you or not.

Where to exercise

Both the home and gym have their advantages and disadvantages. Working out at home is convenient and affordable but there are many distractions. If you exercise at home, make sure you have a reliable workout book or video to guide you. Better yet, hire a fitness instructor who does home service.

Gyms offer equipment that you don't have at home, instructors to help you do the exercises properly and the social motivation to keep you going. However, they can also be expensive and inconvenient if they are located more than 15 minutes from where you live or work.

You may also feel claustrophobic with the hordes of people sharing your space — before and after work, probably also the time you are free.

Fit exercise to schedule

Really determined and imaginative people who lead very busy lives manage to squeeze exercise into their hectic schedules by doing what they can at odd moments of the day. Follow their example and do 10 minute segments of activities throughout the day (for example, 30 minutes of walking at the morning, 10 minutes of stair climbing in the afternoon, 10 minutes of walking in the evening).

Spread out your strength and flexibility exercises also. Do some in the bathroom as you get ready for work. Do some in the office during your coffee break (obviously, you should choose the private one you can do while sitting or standing). Do some at home while watching television. If there is a will, there is a way.

The best time to exercise

If you wake up instantly in the morning with a cheerful attitude for hitting away quickly early in the evening, you are definitely a lark or a morning person. If you have a hard time waking up and can't even talk for the next hour for you alive and energetic as night, you are an owl.

For obvious reasons, larks feel better with morning exercise and owls work out better in the late afternoon or early evening.

But what if you are a lark who has to beat the traffic rush to get to work and can only work out in the afternoon? Or what if you are an owl who comes home too late and can only exercise in the morning?

If this is your situation, don't despair. Your body can adapt to almost any condition. If you give it enough time. Experts recommend giving yourself at least one month to adjust to an exercise schedule that is contrary to your natural energy flow.

Staying motivated

Keep a record of how often you exercise. Psychologists have found that a good way to motivate yourself to stick with your workout sessions (or any other lifestyle change you want to make).

Have realistic goals. Don't expect miracles. It took a while to become unfit; it will also take a while to become fit. Unrealistic expectations can be very discouraging.

Anticipate obstacles and make plans to deal with them. Decrepid obstacles might be traffic, work schedules, or circumstances outside or your plans however. Whatever the obstacle, think about how you will overcome it so you won't be overwhelmed and give up.

Boredom and injury are two reasons why people quit exercising. Cross training is a way to avoid this. It prevents boredom because you don't do the same thing week after week and it prevents injury because it distributes the stress of exercise among various joints and muscles.

The technical definition of cross training is doing different exercises on different days or on the same day in the most basic form of cross training is the good old gym routine: walk on one machine, workout, strength and flexibility components.

An example would be to use a routine: take for 30 minutes, lift weights for 45 minutes and stretch for 10. 15 minutes. (I was workout routine looks somethings like this, congratulations! You are already cross training!

Stop if it hurts

Everyone is built differently. What's perfectly fine for your friend may be painful for you. A good common sense rule is simply "If it hurts, don't do it." Pushing the rule will prevent unnecessary injury in the sport-related time duration.

Remember, there is a difference between muscle fatigue and joint pain. Muscle fatigue or feeling like your muscles are tired is normal when you exercise. You may also feel some muscle soreness in the 24 or 48 hours after exercise.

Joint pain is different. If you feel pain in your joints (knees, lower back, shoulders, elbow) during or after exercise, pay close attention to what your body is trying to tell you.

Fax: www.mypersonalfitness.info

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Pilates side kick

THIS Pilates-inspired exercise strengthens the abdominals while stretching the hamstrings and front of the hips.

Equipment:
Exercise mat

Exercise technique:

1. Lie on your side with one hand in front for balance. Ankles, knees, hips and shoulders should be in a straight line.

2. Raise the top leg a few inches, flex your foot and swing it forward.

3. Then point your toes and swing the leg backwards.

4. Do the desired number of repetitions. Do the other side.

Performance tips:

1. Inhale as the leg goes forward, exhale when the leg goes backwards.

2. Prevent your body from rocking back and forth by tightening up your abs and arms.

3. Move with control and precision. Avoid jerking.

4. Visualize balancing a glass of water on your hip and shoulder. Try your best to keep the water from spilling.

5. Advanced option:

a. Instead of pointing one hand in front, place it behind your head.

b. Instead of lying flat, do the exercise on your elbow. Place the top hand on the floor or behind your head.

Repetitions:
Do 10 repetitions per side.

THE FUN FACE. (seated) Louie Arcangel with Thelma Gaviz; (standing) Aj Dy, Carol Hernado, Adolf Palanca, Hamlet, Vely Japon and Rosary Rivera governor-elect Jimmy Cuna

NOTHING like Kamayan for excellent Filipino food. Enjoying their meal are Montclair Rosario, Marilou Romero, Joy Yanez, Marivic de los Reyes and Press de Guzmans (standing) Koko Lucas, Maribel and Carol Hernado

She gives gifts on her birthday

LAWYER Candido Pior and wife Carmen

SOUTHERN girl Lois Salgado and Louie Arcangel

DADAING HIS KIDS. Mega entrepreneur Nicca V. Villaluz-Lacsamana with nine daughters Mara and Cara and son Beko

RIKZ, Cecile and Mario Siosi Garcia

ROTARY past district governor Jun Tambunting and the celebrant's mother, Lita Bathasar

JANINE and Tonty Cuna with Tweety de Leon-Gonzales

CRYSH Calayca and Sam Yee

CHEF Sau del Rosario and Marie Wintermeyer of Cafe

RM Francisco, model Lyn Abrazaldo and architect Gil Encarnacion

THE SUPER fun birthday bash thrown for everyone's pasuyo was exactly that. In full admiration there, Makati history past president and socialite Mariloll Villavicencio's humble, down pole and fellow Antechan clubbed to the popular Kamayan Restaurant on Tower Road to be with her on her special day pasuyo.

The occasion gave the invitees a chance to see the inside of the restaurant's two-lift and they approved what they saw.

For Mariloll's last night, Kamayan served its fresh, absolutely delectable and fragrant Filipino favorites made from sumptuous recipes. But here's made it the place to dine. Filipino-style, pasuyo.

My pick couldn't get enough of the succulent *lechon de Leche*, stuffing *Adobong Baboi* and the *bulalo* ng Malapan, a special fish found in Batangas and the all-around top favorite, Chicken Drumsti.

While enjoying our fab dinner, the BDP (things played) Sunshine Broadway issues which did not divert us from the task at hand—the pigging-out process.

As I scanned the dining area, I saw that not one fair color of the affair. Well in the color of iris and love flowed tonight for Mariloll's party," said army Jay Buenaseller, who was probably in a romantic mood that night, darlings.

Here, there and everywhere helping the celebrant extend her kindness was gentleman for all seasons, law-well-liked husband Flo Flo, and their children Kenjie, Flo and Dwight. Mara, Cara, Beko and Ricky, and their pals.

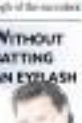
Taken to lucrative foundations, which area her known children, is one of the charitable organizations supported by Mariloll, who has been involved in civic service for many years, pasuyo. In instead of gifts, Mariloll asked blunders donate to the foundation.

Later in the evening, a video about Mariloll's life was shown. At the end of the affair, Fr. Rocky Evangelista, head of the foundation, left with a smile on his face, watch.

"I am very happy," the birthday celebrant said. "This is not a grand celebration, just a simple one, but it is very meaningful not just for me, but for the children of Nicca to Don Bosco Foundation as well." Well said, pasuyo.

Here's wishing and hoping but the best for a girl with a heart of gold, Cheers!

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH



Maurice Arcayna

Photos by Alec Que Rhapsodic Mac

CK Eternity moment

Don't you just love opening an e-birthday invite because as was de rollers? Well, I do so, without batting an eyelash, I dashed to the Rockin' Cafe to be present some time at Klein—CK Eternity Moment, at the place-to-be, the Mercato Cafe, in the posh Greenbelt 4, Makati.

It turned out that CK Eternity Moment was for you gals, but since our men already there, well, why not, eh, eh, eh? Just kidding! Moment is a fragrance inspired by the exhilarating of falling in love. Bathed with pleasure. Filled with the thrill of promise and discovery."

Lucinda super dedicated general manager, cyber-smart Miss Sokorro Cuenca, and cyber-smart manager Vicky Marchbench gave the welcome remarks. Also there were CK exies and marketing specialists Abigail Bory of Unilever Cosmetics International, who poured in just for this occasion; Lucinda Hipolito Ann Wong, Shirley, Millie Cenizo, Carla Dauge, Lee Barberan and April Marquez, plus two bright stars in the business, young, talented stylists Shahani Encabo and Ana Lukaku.

Before the invitees could bat an eyelash, we were completely immersed in a pink-bathed ambience that also featured a mini video of Jennifer Monsoon."

Closely enjoying the whole scene were top women advisors in the spotlight, like the popular Mega magazine's excellent editor Lisa Gokongwei, and entrepreneur Anne Marie Tiausell.

Then, while enjoying wave of yummy finger-food and sipping wine, I even got a sneak peek of CK Eternity Moment TV spot starring Scarlett Johansson, the gorgeous, hot sweet girl next door of renowned magazines like Harper's Bazaar (January 2005), Esquire (July-August 2005), Teen Vogue, with Topher Grace (February 2005), and Hollywood (February 2005).

She will also be prominently featured in Vanity Fair's yearly "Best of Hollywood" issue (January 2005).

The TV spot also featured brilliant new British model Tinsel Ford.

CK Eternity Moment is exclusively distributed in the country by Lancôme.

THE LONGGO CONNECTION. Cheski Lucas and the Lady of the hour, Mariloll Villavicencio, with Linda Dizon and fellow Mercedarian Villanueva

LET'S PARTY! Mariloll with Christopher Garcia, Mariloll V., Dwight Lago, Samantha Ramirez, Raul Ramirez, and Dixon Garcia

ATTRACTIVE and lovable steward Stephanie Zabel in new formfit engaged to be French beau, Victor Delfour, of Toulouse, France.

Scoop

That adorable fellow with the boy-next-door looks and talented gourmet, brilliant Stephanie Zabel, returned a prepared of underage beau into newly big love, handsome and live charmant Victor Delfour of Toulouse, France, right after the New Year.

Victor is a business consultant residing in Paris, where he met the vivacious Stephanie, who has been studying in that city of romance for almost two years now.

Both are here in Cosmo Manila as parents vacationing for the holidays with the 2-year-handle challenge.

CAUPIN! Khim Soler and Marketing associates Abigail Bory from Singapore, Lucinda brand manager Vicky Marchabesh and Lucinda general manager Mia Soldevilla-Cuenca

Keep abreast of developments in wellness field

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

CHEERS with the business of daily living, it helps that there are health farms and beauty treatments to assist in wrapping our lifestyle better. Thus, we should keep abreast of changes in the wellness field.

Goodbye pain

Marking its 15th year in traditional and alternative healthcare, the Intercon Chiropractic Center opened its well-appointed spa-inspired clinic at the Orient Building at the Madrigal Business Center, across Ayala Alabang Village.

Headed by the well-respected and well-liked Dr. Sherrie G. Carrasco, the center offers a variety of services and treatments for practically every ache and pain. It has just eight disciplines under one roof: chiropractic to correct dysfunctions in the body with a special focus on the spine; nervous system; physical therapy (for body strengthening); myotherapy (specialized massage for muscular problems using the latest gadgetry); acupuncture (to balance energy levels and flow in the body (the World Health Organization now recognizes acupuncture for the treatment of 40 health conditions like diabetes, stroke injuries, migraine, slipped disc, etc.); Alexander Technique, a way of retraining the body to overcome bad habits like bad posture that leads to injury; yoga, a body-mind-spirit workout for increased flexibility; STOTT Pilates, fluid exercises to mobilize the body; reflexology/sports medicine; conventional medical consultation for rehabilitation.

A healthcare program can be designed for you according to your specific needs. Call 8509910 ext. 112.

Drink to your health

Once there was only tap water. Then, the public welcomed into their lives distilled, mineral, tonized, alkaline and purified water.

And now there is structured water. It is simply water structured to consist of smaller molecular clusters instead of the usual, larger clusters of water molecule.

The grande-brained in refined nanotechnology, an advanced system of multiple purification that removes contaminants, stabilizes the water and water minerals and energizes the water molecule to better penetrate cell membranes and maximize hydration.

Structured water is oxygen-rich, is alkaline and has the perfect pH level to match the pH level of the fluids in our bodies. Safe for infants and children, it is considered by some medical experts as best for convincing patients to re-gain their memory.

Serye's, a popular vegetarian restaurant in Xentromall, Loyola Heights owned by Dr. Orian Andria, uses structured water. Call 4332222 or 09194800330.

Scrub to the limit

A touch-it-forward treatment these days is a body scrub to end all scrubs. There are scrubs and there are scrubs. Since we know only too well that skin sells (it's your entry into works, the limit for a thorough cleansing is up.

At Nanah Perenti Salon in Makati, for-sepsis to specialist Jeanjeane de Guzman, pampers regular clients with the one-hour SPE Scrub, which consists of Limpiho exfoliating cremes and oils from Paris designed to smoothen over hard-to-reach areas before the rest doesn't dissect) followed by a series of deluxe showers from massage pressure to relaxing de-stress softness. By appointment only. Call 8924464.

The power of your aura

Stress and again, it has been said no other wellness consequence can more powerfully than exercise. Through exercise, energy is expended by the body which is indestructible. That same force generates an inner strength or renewed energy that emanates from the physical and projects over as one's aura or personal glow.

Call it reading confidence, boldness, strength...one's aura is the "aura-science."

It is said to capture the full power of auras, which are directly influenced by your chakras and your moods—red (creative), (emotional), blue (communicating)—your intuition), indigo (intuition), violet (connection to divine)—auras or top of the head). Make designed to help you develop durable and useful fitness gear dubbed the Aura line.

Exercising can harness the power of colors. Because colors can influence your mood, and your mood affects your auric color, adorning yourself in rainbow hues can only do you good.

Organic to go

Now being planned due to popular demand, Mister Parabo de Buena, the organic queen (she once owned the Sisters Restaurant), will soon be delivering healthy meals right to your dining table.

You will have a choice between seven-day and 14-day organic meals (from breakfast to dinner, as well as snacks). Many experts that, within a week, customers will begin to see and feel the difference in their energy/vitality levels and sense of well-being.

The menu will include oriental and continental dishes. Organic food doesn't mean expensive, as for vegetarian (as in organic. There are now organic eggs, chickens and fish, like bangus. Call 8156963.

Love and light!

ILLUSTRATION BY LEO TOLENTINO

ON BELLA: Deep V top, 7/8 bootcut leggings; On Melinda: Deep V top, bootleg long pants

BALLET wrap top, Lotus print top, bootleg long pants, Alyssa

WEAVE cotton cover-up, 7/8 bootcut leggings

Clothes specially designed for yoga

PUMA, together with international fashion icon Christy Turlington, launches its newest collection of performance yoga wear for today's lifestyle.

Mahomaia is an ancient ritual representing divineness, stillness, Higher inspiration.

Created under the direction of style icon and yoga practitioner Turlington, the collection has a range of apparel especially created for women, the physical limb of yoga.

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Created under the direction of style icon and yoga practitioner Turlington, the collection has a range of apparel especially created for women, the physical limb of yoga.

But the collection goes beyond yoga, addressing the need for clothes that allow freedom of movement in other mind-body disciplines like Pilates and tai-chi. Each garment is designed for comfort and flexibility.

Turlington says the line allows the person to feel as much herself as possible. Mahomaia enhances her sense of self.

The line uses soft functional fabrics and colors. It is balanced with Puma's distinctive, forward-thinking design for versatile, multi-functional clothes.

Turlington says the collection aims to meet the needs of women who do not feel comfortable in traditional active-wear while promoting both traditional and non-traditional sports. The Mahomaia design not only follows function but also incorporates lifestyle, fashion and spirituality.

Whether one practices yoga or not, any woman will appreciate the comfort and ease of movement the collection offers.

Bela Lipa, who teaches both Sivananda Yoga and Ashtanga Yoga in her home in Makati, has tested the flexibility and other benefits of the new collection with one of her students.

Sivananda Yoga promotes correct breathing, asanas or postures, proper relaxation and diet and meditation while Ashtanga Yoga promotes applying locks or chakra points, proper breathing/movement system and drishti, literally a "looking place" or centre where one focuses to concentrate.

The Puma Mahomaia Collection is available in Puma stores in Glorietta Ayala Center, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Ortigas, Festival Mall-Alabang, and Puma shop-in-shop areas in Rustan's Makati, MCE boutiques in Greenbelt and Robinsons Galleria, and Planet Sports outlets in Glorietta and Trinoma Mall-Bicktwil.

Strange out-of-body experiences

MY two-part article on sleep paralysis and astral projection (Dec. 14 and 21) elicited enthusiastic response from a number of readers. Apparently more people are experiencing this phenomenon than commonly believed.

Before they read my article, they did not know there was a name for it and that it happened to many other people.

The readers shared strange experiences with astral projection or out-of-body experience (OOBE), some of which I was hearing for the first time.

At the same time, a visiting Australian friend, who is a chiropractor by profession and a psychic researcher by necessity, gave me a copy of a report on what scientists think of OOBE. In effect, they are saying that it is nothing more than an "interference with the temporo-parietal junction of the brain."

Let us consider first the fascinating stories and questions of readers and comment on the scientific theory later.

Three pyramids

Marissa Bernal Espinelli, an international trainor, was conducting a two-week course in Singapore 1995. During a lunch break, she took a cat nap as she was very tired.

As soon as she lay down in bed with hands over her stomach, "I just felt I was floating, going through the walls of the hotel, actually seeing houses, malls and market below. I felt the wind blowing on my hair, touching my face. I pressed harder, a comfort that tells hundreds of different cities and colors. Later I saw three pyramids like structures below. There I was reminded of my 1:30 p.m. session and was back in my bed. I still felt the wind on my face when I stood up. I felt refreshed though still a bit tired. I did not sleep because I was aware of everything that was happening. I do not know what caused this experience."

Two years later, she told a friend who had just attended a conference in Egypt about her experience and seeing three pyramids in what looked like a desert. She wondered why she saw three pyramids because she knew of only one.

Her friend told her there were indeed three pyramids in that place she visited in her astral body. It never have been the three pyramids of Giza (but Marissa saw. Then the friend learned Marissa's gift — a replica of the three pyramids!

This is an interesting case of OOBE because the experience was later verified or validated in the waking state. In my advanced REP and Higher Consciousness Seminar, I teach participants how to get out of their physical bodies consciously and to verify what they had seen in the astral plane when they wake up, among other things. They are also taught how to get back to their bodies safely.

INNER AWARENESS

Leonor S. Escaño

New experiences

The following are strange OOBE experiences of readers for which I have no adequate explanation, because this is the first time I've heard of them.

The first is from Hannalore Tabin, a short story writer who said she was so relieved after reading my article because sleep paralysis had been happening to her for years and she was always afraid she would not wake up.

On three different occasions, her sleep paralysis involved "the sensation of a snake slithering itself through my hair." The first time it happened, she woke up suddenly and felt like something had loaded been inserted through her hair.

The second time she became afraid because she could, at the same time, have sworn she was hearing or chanting outside her door, although she knew no one was awake at that time. She said she wanted to blame it on her active imagination but it was too real to ignore.

The third time it happened was only weeks ago. "It did not feel like a snake this time," she said. She was between wakefulness and dreaming. "I heard a rattling, sort of scratching sound in my wooden shelves. And then, it suddenly started jumping up and down between the sound of my hair. I was awake but not really awake."

She asks: "Does this sensation of being soaked through and women murmuring have anything to do with astral projection? Are hangovers and sleep paralysis interrelated? Is it possible one may never wake up from sleep paralysis? Is there much in the belief that meeting with astral projection also causes a soul to get lost and never find its body? Is astral projection done every time we sleep? Or are these instances when we are just asleep?"

She ends her long letter with the following: "Thank you very much, sir, for bring the paranormal voices of reason and light to those whose minds have faded away. There are so many things we cannot understand in this world. I most importantly is how many individuals keep closing their doors to this matter. I have read your columns about how you are being harassed... and I want you to know there are so many of us... who are rooting for you."

First I would like to thank you for your very kind words and for your confidence and trust in this writer. All I am really doing is sharing the fruits of my years of research with my readers and the public at large. I have no intention of converting any one to my way of thinking. (Continued next week)

E-mail: lescano@pldtcmail.com.ph. Visit website at www.angelfire.com/journal/lescano

Handy guides for parents

BABY Minder books are designed to provide helpful tips to parents expecting a new baby—whether for the first or nth time.

Parenthood is always filled with both excitement and anxiety.

Published by Mecmin Communications, Baby Minder is a set of four booklets offering practical tips on rearing your child: Feeding Your Baby, Supporting Mental and Physical Growth, Grooming and Hygiene, and Generating Common Elements.

It is now available in all National Bookstore branches, Goodwill Bookstore, Booksdeals, and Rebisland stores at only P50 per booklet.

Estrogen-free contraceptive pill

ORGANON Philippines, Inc. recently launched the first and only estrogen-free ovulation inhibitor oral contraceptive pill which can be used during breastfeeding as it is proven to have no adverse effect on lactation and growth of newborns.

This pill, with its simple and cost-incon 28-tablet regimen, contains only one hormone—the progestogen Desogestrel, 75mcg per tablet. This estrogen-free pill helps prevent pregnancy with 21 times margin of safety for a missed pill. Mothers can start taking this pill as early as three to four weeks after giving birth.

Results from a study in Germany presented by Dr. Ulrich Koch show that estrogen-related side effects like breast tension, nausea, edema and headache improved or got resolved within three months of using the estrogen-free pill containing 75mcg of Desogestrel.

The new estrogen-free pill is now available to leading drugstores nationwide. Call 8177818.